SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

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By
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By the Same Author

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SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

BY

THE REV. A. M. SKELLY, O.P.

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FOREWORD

In presenting the following pages to the public a few words of explanation seem necessary.

Those who will have read my *Doctrinal Discourses* will not have gone far in the perusal of the present volume without noticing that the matter and form of the words are the same as those given in the former work and only the arrangement of the pieces is different. The fact is, some of the volumes of the preceding series becoming exhausted, the writer thought better to rearrange the whole collection and publish them according as they were originally conceived and spoken. This will do away with the anomaly of cutting up the pieces into short discourses to the perplexity and irritation of readers, and will eventuate in offering the public three volumes with entirely independent titles, namely,

1st. Sermons and Addresses.

2nd. Jesus and Mary.

3rd. The Sacraments and the Commandments.

Other volumes are projected which will appear in the not distant future.

A. M. S.

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SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

THE BLESSED TRINITY

"All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. XXVIII, 18–19.)

I

EXPOSITION OF THE MYSTERY

1. There is proposed for our veneration today [1] one of those truths that it is not in the power of reason to make known to us; that experience cannot teach us; that the senses of themselves cannot aid us to acquire a knowledge of. It is a mystery which God alone can sound the depths of, and of which we could have no knowledge had it not pleased Him to make it known to us by the truth of His Word and by the light of Faith. I speak, dearly beloved, of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity—a mystery which, although incomprehen-

[1] Trinity Sunday.

sible, is none the less worthy of our faith and adoration, since it is the only Son of God Himself who has revealed it to us.

The Trinity is the most august of mysteries. It goes down to the very depths of the Godhead, and embraces His whole Being. It is the groundwork of all religious truth, the foundation of our faith, the first cause of our hope, without the belief and efficacy of which we cannot be truly called Christians or have any solid hope of salvation. But it is at the same time the most hidden and inscrutable of mysteries. And this fact finely shows us the method of the Catholic Church in the proposition of the articles of Her belief, viz., that it is the first that is proposed to us in the Catechism, to be inculcated to our children, and to be accepted by all Catholics. And why? Because on it depend all other truths, and, it being once believed in, all the other truths of our holy religion are easy of acceptance.

2. We say the Trinity is the most incomprehensible of mysteries. Now, this incomprehensibility does not come from any want on Its part, since God, being the most spiritual of all beings, is, as regards Himself, the most capable of being known. This incomprehensibility then of the Trinity, comes from the weakness and inability of our minds to take in the knowledge of so great an object. And in this, as theologians remark, we are

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in the same predicament as the owl is in regard to the light of the sun. Take the owl the bird of night, and set it free by starlight; its range of vision is extensive; its gaze is keen and penetrating. But let it be placed in the glare of the blazing sun, it flies hither and thither in foolish fashion, as a creature that has lost the faculty of sight. Why? Is it that objects cannot be seen by sunlight? No, but the glare of the sun is too powerful for its eyes adapted as they are by nature to see in midnight darkness. So it is with us in regard to the Trinity. God is in Himself of all things the most capable of being thoroughly known. But this very thing, His vastness, His grandeur, and the infinity of His Being overpower all created intellect, so that God alone understands Himself fully. And hence it is said of Him in Scripture, now, that "His dwelling-place is in the midst of inaccessible light"; and again, that "clouds circle Him round about," and that "He hath set darkness His covering." As regards Himself, He is all brightness; as regards us, He is all dark and incomprehensible.

3. But though we may not comprehend the Trinity, yet can we form some analogy of It from objects that we see. It is said of St. Patrick that he expounded the doctrine of the Trinity on Tara from the shamrock leaf, which, though it spring from a single stem, is triple in its figure. Perhaps a better

object of analogy might be a three-cornered tower, which, while it rears itself in its unity towards heaven, offers three faces to the horizon. However that may be, the doctrine is given by St. Thomas as clearly as it can be presented to the human intellect. And he teaches that just as when we contemplate any earthly object, as a tree, a house, etc., a real, though spiritual image of that object, is formed in the mind, which image is called by philosophers the *concept* or the *mental word*. So God, contemplating Himself from all eternity, and fully comprehending His infinite Being, conceives or generates His own Consubstantial Word, who is, as the Apostle says, "the figure of His substance, and the express image of His glory"; or, as it is expressed in the Creed which we read at Mass, "God begotten of God; Light kindled of Light; true God; begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father."

Again, the Father and the Son regarding each other with a deep, infinite, all penetrating gaze, and seeing there essential Goodness, and the fountain of all being, breathe towards each other an eternal sigh of love, and the term or product of that love of the Father and the Son is the "Spirit of Love," the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, who thus from all eternity proceeds from the mutual love of the Father and the

Son. Such is the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as expounded by the greatest of the Church's doctors, and as accepted by all theologians.

II

THE RELATIONS WE ENTER INTO WITH THE TRINITY THROUGH BAPTISM

1. Now, it might appear that the doctrine of the Trinity, is, for us, unpractical, and a mere article of barren or speculative belief. But no, dear brethren, for, in the truths of our holy religion, there is none without its practical application; least of all this mystery of the Trinity, which is to the Christian religion what the foundation is to a building, what the source is to the river, what a first principle of knowledge is to the truths that result from it, and have from it their origin. Take away belief in the Trinity and all the other truths of religion topple to the ground and perish. Take away the Trinity, I say, and there can be no Incarnate Word, no Redeemer for the human race, no sacrifice of Calvary or Mass, no forgiveness of sin, no hope of pardon, no Christ, no true religion. Neither is it unpractical in its application to us. For, through Baptism we enter on the most intimate relations with the three Persons of the

Blessed Trinity, since, by it, we are made the "children of the Eternal Father, members of the Son, temples of the Holy Ghost."

By Baptism we are made in the first place, I say, children of God the Father. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us," says St. John, "that we should be called, and should be in reality, the children of God." Nor is this all. For, as the complement of our adoption St. Paul tells us "we are made heirs of heaven." "For, if sons, heirs also, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ." Yes, "we are the children of God," we are adopted into the divine family. "We are made sharers of the divine nature," says St. Peter. What an honor! Now-a-days, when a subject has distinguished himself as a soldier, as a statesman, as an ambassador, as a public servant in any department of the State, he is decorated by the sovereign, he is honored with orders and titles. In the time of the Roman emperors this system was carried farther still, and when a citizen distinguished himself pre-eminently he was adopted into the imperial family and received the title of Caesar, together with a share in the government of the empire. Ours is a greater honor, for by Baptism and in receiving the title of Christian, we are adopted into the family of the Godhead, and are made "sharers in His divinity." "See what charity

the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called and should be, in reality, the children of God."

O dearly beloved, people nowadays look upon it as a great distinction to trace their pedigree three or four generations back to some distinguished ancestor. They pride themselves and with reason in being able to point to this or that eminent man or woman as a blood relation. But what are all earthly distinctions? what is all nobility of blood in comparison with the great honor which you and I enjoy of being able to claim God for our Father, and of being made sharers in His Divinity?

It is said that honors change manners, and this is a truth that is illustrated in our daily experience. Let a man, for instance, be raised to the bench. Let him be made a judge, or a privy councillor; and let that man compromise himself by an offense against society; you say that he has forgotten his dignity and lowered his order. With this thought we are told St. Bernard used to urge himself on to acts of heroic virtue. "Bernard," he used to say to himself, "who art thou? what art thou?" Let us employ the same means for the same noble purpose, and say to ourselves: Who am I, and what am I, in being made a Christian? I am a child of God. I am a sharer in the divine nature. I am heir to a throne in Heaven. And if

so, would it not be beneath my dignity as such to commit an act unworthy of one enjoying so great an honor. On the contrary, should not such a thought stir me up to the performance of noble acts of Christian virtue, that so I may merit the approval of all good men, but especially of my Father, who is in Heaven.

2. But we have other relations with the Blessed Trinity than that of sonship, and in Baptism we are made, moreover, members of Jesus Christ. "Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor VI, 15.) What is it to be a member of Jesus Christ? What is it to be a member of His mystical body? It is to bear the same relation to Jesus Christ that the members of our body bear to our head. Now you know that the head is the seat of intelligence and sensation; that the nervous system and the whole life of the body converges in the brain, and that the head consequently influences and governs all the members. So it is with us as Christians. All supernatural life, all grace, all holiness, come to us by reason of our union with the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Head. On the other hand, let a member be separated from the head, be it leg, or arm, or other, it presently dies and becomes a disgusting thing that begins to putrefy and needs to be buried under ground. So, also, the Christian that is sepa-

rated from Jesus Christ by sin, is made a dead and putrid member, and sooner or later, unless he repent and receive anew the life of grace from Him, will be buried in the grave of hell. Therefore, St. Paul, after he reminds us that we are as Christians "the members of Jesus Christ," tells us that "we should put on Jesus Christ"; that we should live the life of Jesus Christ; that we should "walk as he walked." And St. Cyprian, commenting on the doctrine of the Apostle, says that "as Christians we should be as other Christs by the practice of His virtues."

3. But, let me go on to say that by Baptism we are made the temples of the Holy Ghost. "Know you not that your members are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?" (I Cor. VII, 19.) What is it to be a temple of the Holy Ghost? It is to be as a dwelling-place in which He resides in peace and honor. See the material temples of God, our churches. They are built of costly material. They are decorated with lavish expenditure. They are kept clean and ornamented, as becomes the respect due to so great a Presence. We are told that the temple of Solomon was inlaid with ivory, and cedarwood, and gold, and jewels, and that the riches of the wealthiest king on the earth were not spared to make it worthy of the presence of God who dwelt therein. Such treasures are lavished on

our material temples. The Christian soul is the living temple of the Deity. Shall it be less lavishly ornamented? But, what are the ornaments that go to the decoration of the living temple? They are the Christian virtues—purity, holiness in thought and action, charity, meekness and humility of heart, the crucifixion of the passions; in a word, the "putting on Jesus Christ," in whom the Godhead dwelt corporally, and who was Himself the "express image of the Father." So it must be with us to be worthy temples of the Holy Ghost. We must be the living images of Jesus Christ, by the putting on of His life, and by the practice of His virtues.

Let these be the lessons that we are to learn from the consideration of this, the greatest of God's mysteries. Let these be the duties that we are to perform, till that happy time when we shall be permitted to fix our gaze upon the face of God, and our eternity will be absorbed in the contemplation of the mystery of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to whom be honor, praise, and benediction for ever and ever.

THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made Him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. XI, 33–36.)

I

WISDOM, JUSTICE, MERCY

1. Thus spoke the great Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans. He had been moralizing on the mysterious ways of God's providence, which called the Gentile peoples to the light of the true faith, while leaving the Jews, his compatriots, in the darkness of unbelief; till, struck with the mystery of predestination, a mystery that beggars all human comprehension, he broke forth into that sublime apothegm, one of the most striking passages in all Scripture: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How

incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!"

Thoughts somewhat like these are doubtless called up in the minds of us all at the contemplation of the mystery we commemorate today. The Trinity is the most inscrutable as it is the most august of mysteries, and its contemplation brings home to us how ineffective is all human thought in the presence of the wonders of the Godhead. To form some conception of those wonders we must take into account two things: first, that God contains in Himself all perfections; and, second, that in Him each perfection is infinite.

That God possesses in Himself all possible perfections enters into the very notion of His Godhead. For, if any possible perfection were wanting to Him, God would no longer be God. And as to the infinity of the Divine perfections we have only to repeat a truism and say: "Everything that is in God is God Himself." It is by consequence of necessity infinite. His perfections are not distinct from His Being, because they are His Being Itself. And as nothing can limit the number of His admirable perfections; so, nothing can limit their greatness. Hence, God is not only wise, but infinitely wise. He is not only just, but infinitely just. He is not only merciful, but infinitely merciful. His power is without limits. His greatness, without

measure. His duration, without beginning and without end.

Let us contemplate some of those perfections today, and first His wisdom.

2. What wisdom can equal Yours, O my God, and what can escape Your knowledge? God knows all things. God sees all things. God searches all things. His knowledge can neither increase nor diminish; because it is infinite. The past and the future are always present to His eyes. All the prophecies and all the prophets are so many witnesses of the depth of His knowledge. What takes place the most secretly in the world; what is the most hidden in the heart of man; all is laid open to His eyes. And how can the heart of man be unknown to You, O my God, since You "pierce even to the depth of the abysses." Is it not You who formed our hearts, and, therefore, do You not know them even to their least desires? Hence, we may say with the prophet: "How admirable is Your knowledge, O Lord. I cannot think of it without being penetrated with fear. You have proved me and known me perfectly. You have perceived my thoughts from afar. You have taken note of the way by which I walk, and the whole course of my life. You have foreseen all my ways, and all my words, even before I pronounced them. You have, O Lord, a knowledge alike of all things past and

future. In vain will I call on darkness to cover me. Night has no darkness for You. It is to Your eyes as luminous as the day!"

What joy for him who fears God and who serves Him to know that God sees all things; that He knows all things; that the groans he heaves in the depths of his heart are not hidden from Him; that He sees in secret the alms hidden in the breast of the poor; the prayer breathed forth in His presence in the secrecy of the bed chamber; the fast, or the act of mortification hidden from the eyes and from the knowledge of men. What consolation for him who loves God to be able to say to Him as Saint Peter said to Jesus Christ: "Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest I love Thee."

But, on the other hand, what an overwhelming conviction for the wicked to know that God sees all the depths of their corruption; that He knows the most secret thoughts of their hearts. In vain does the murderer seek, like Cain, to hide his perfidy in voluntary banishment. In vain does the unjust man, like Achab, seek pretexts to cover his injustice and cruelty. In vain does the hypocrite, like the Pharisee, try to impose upon God by keeping up a deceitful appearance before men. In vain does the impure, like the infamous accusers of Susanna, "turn away his eyes lest he see heaven."

In vain does he seek to hide his disorders under cover of the night. In vain do those unhappy ones reassure themselves, saying to themselves: "who sees me? The darkness screens me; no one sees what I do; what have I to fear? God Himself knows not my crimes." "Unhappy ones," says the Holy Spirit to them by the mouth of the Wise Man: "Do you not know that the eyes of God are more luminous than the sun; that He knows all the ways of men?"

3. If the wisdom of God is infinite, His justice and His mercy are not less so. Father and Judge at the same time, "He hates none of those things that He created"; but He hates with an infinite hatred impiety and the impious. "His judgments are from the abyss; but His mercy is spread over all His works." "All His ways are mercy and truth." "The whole earth is full of the mercies of the Lord." "They shine forth in Heaven, and His truth rears itself even to the clouds." Both the one and the other are impenetrable by their depth. Just and merciful at the same time. He knows how to punish and to pardon, "and to render to everyone according to his works." Infinitely merciful, He calls the sinner; He awaits the sinner; He draws the sinner; He loads him with a thousand goods in spite of his unworthiness and ingratitude; and in how many ways have we not all felt, and

do we not every day experience His mercies? He embraces the prodigal when he returns to Him; but Judge infinitely just, He "makes no exception of persons." "He confounds not the just with the unjust." He avenges Himself on hardened hearts and impenitent souls "who despise the riches of His patience, and who treasure up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath." He is a Father and Judge whom we ought to fear and love; fear infinitely, because His justice is infinite; love infinitely, because "His mercy exalteth itself above His justice."

II

GOD'S POWER, GREATNESS, ETERNITY

1. What shall I say of God's power, and what can be compared to it? Consider the universe. It cost Him but a word. It is His power that sustains it. "He weighs the waters in His hand." He changes all things as He pleases. Nothing is impossible or difficult to Him, and nothing can resist the power of His arm.

If we cannot comprehend the power of God, how shall we be able to measure His greatness? "He is higher than the heavens." How then shall you lift yourself to Him? He is deeper than hell.

How shall you comprehend Him? He is broader than land and sea.

If He wishes to destroy the whole universe, who shall dare to contradict Him, or who shall have the hardihood to ask Him a reason for His conduct?

Yes, the greatness of God is infinite. He is immense. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" He says by Jeremias. "Heaven is My throne; the earth is My footstool," He says to us by the mouth of another prophet. And where could you not be, O my God; since all that lives, lives only by You; and all that moves, moves only by You; since it is in You "we live, and move, and have our being." God acts everywhere and He is everywhere He acts. Since His nature is infinitely simple, His action is not different from Himself. He is then everywhere, and everywhere whole and entire. Everywhere—in Heaven where He reigns, and where He causes His elect to reign with Him—on earth where He acts unceasingly without losing anything of His repose, and where He governs men with as much goodness as wisdom—everywhere, even in hell where He crushes by His justice those who on earth despised His mercy.

2. God is everywhere—truth infinitely overwhelming to the sinner, infinitely consoling to the just. God is everywhere! O sinner, where then will

you go to offend Him? Find out, if you can, a place where He is not; there I permit you to satisfy your passion. But is there such a place, and can there be? And if there is not; oh, in His presence to offend Him! to offend Him before His very eyes!

But where will you go after having offended Him to escape His vengeance? "Lord," says David, "where shall I go to hide myself from Thy spirit, and whither shall I fly before Thy face? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there. If I descend to hell, Thou art there. If I take wings in the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, is it not Thy hand alone that can conduct me thither?" Where in fact can you go if not from God to God; since He is everywhere? Where go, O sinner, if not from His mercy to His justice; if you refuse to go from His justice to His mercy? Return to Him, then, not by movements of the body, since He is everywhere; but by the conversion of your heart; by the change of that corrupted heart which has separated itself from Him by the unruliness of its affections and desires.

God is everywhere—truth infinitely consoling to the just. He was with Isaac on the funeral pile to preserve his life. He was with Joseph in the pit and in the prison to draw him out of them with glory. He was with Daniel in the lions' den to preserve him from the fury of those savage beasts.

He was with Peter in chains. He was with Jonas in the belly of the whale. He is present to you, too, to listen to you. What a subject to give you confidence in your prayers? He is in the midst of you to console you. What a source of joy? He is with you to defend you. What have you to fear? "Were I in the shadow of death I will not fear," cried out David; "because Thou, my God, art with me." Where can you transport yourself that He is not? And who can tear you from Him, if you do not wish to lose Him? He is that good Friend whom one finds in all one's wants, because He is almighty; whom one finds everywhere, because He is immense; whom one finds always, because His duration is infinite; because He is without beginning and without end.

3. Everything that is in the world commenced to be; everything must have an end. Time that gives birth to all things in the end carries them all away with it. It is only God who subsists eternally. He did not commence to be; since it is He who gave commencement to all things; and since He possesses in Himself the source and plenitude of life. Neither shall He cease to be. "His years shall never end," because they are eternal. The heavens themselves which are the work of His hands shall perish, and "God shall change them as a garment"; but for You, O my God, You are

always the same! Men succeed one another and die, each one in his turn. "One generation passes away and another succeeds," but in God there is neither change nor shadow of vicissitude. "Thou alone art immortal," O my God, and our souls themselves, though they can never die, are not immortal after the manner that You are. You alone have life by Your essence. It is of You that all creatures have received it, and by You that they preserve it. You were before the world was made, and You will be after it shall cease to be. You will be even when the world shall cease to be for us; that is to say, at death; and it is then that You will appear alone great, alone unchangeable.

Happy then those who attach themselves to God alone, and who put in Him alone all their confidence. They fear not to lose their support. Whilst those who attach themselves to creatures are always in agitation and trouble; whilst "the heart of the fool is like the wheel of a car," which is never at rest; whilst he never finds what he seeks, or whilst what he thinks he holds escapes him; the heart of the just on the contrary is always tranquil. "He who hopes in the Lord is as the mountain of Sion; he shall never be moved." He knows that his treasure is where it cannot perish; "that it is where thieves cannot break in and steal; that it is where the rust doth not moulder nor doth the moth con-

sume." He knows that "neither men, nor angels, nor any other creature, can separate him from the charity of his God"; and it is this that makes his tranquillity and repose.

4. Such is our God, my brethren, the contemplation of whose wonders is called up so urgently by the mystery celebrated by the Church today. But what have I been able to say to you of Him in comparison to what He is? No, all that we can say of Him is nothing, because He is above all our thoughts and all our words. To sum up, then, God is holy; God is wise; God is good; God is merciful. He is just; He is unchangeable; He is perfect; and He is all this infinitely, because He is God. Let us be silent and adore. "Silence is praise to Thee, O God of Sion." A silence of respect and love can honor Him more than all our words and all our praises. To Him be glory and empire forever. Amen.

WHICH IS THE TRUE CHURCH? [1]

I

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof." (Matt. XIII, 31–32.)

1. The Kingdom of Heaven, so often spoken of in St. Matthew's Gospel, usually refers to the Church of God on earth. Here, our Lord likens it, on account of its phenomenal growth and power from weak beginnings, to the mustard seed.

Because of the multitude of institutions today claiming to be the Kingdom of Heaven, or the true Church of Jesus Christ, we here examine the proofs which go to show which of those is in reality the true and genuine Church of Jesus Christ, and which are false ones, and this we do through the following line of argument.

[1] [The following conference was delivered in mid-ocean on board the great Atlantic liner, *George Washington*. The audience was made up mainly of non-Catholics.]

In that sublime discourse pronounced by our Lord at the Last Supper He concluded with a fervent prayer for His disciples and the members of His Church. "Holy Father!" He said. "Keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we also are . . . and not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me, that they all may be one, as Thou Father, in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me . . . that they may be one, as we also are one, I in Thee and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one and the world may know that Thou hast sent me." Jn. XVII, 11–23.

Now in looking over the Christian world today in the light of this prayer, we come across a strange fact: and it is, that Christianity seems split up into a thousand schools or sects, each believing different, and, in many cases, diametrically opposite doctrines, and observing different religious practices; and, yet, all claiming to be the one true Church of Christ.

What then? Has the prayer of our Lord been unheard? and have His dying aspirations proved vain? No, my friends, the prayers of the Christ are always heard by His Eternal Father, as the Saviour Himself testifies.

While standing by the open grave of Lazarus, Jesus, lifting up His eyes, said: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me, and I know that Thou hearest Me always." And we are to believe that He was heard in this case also: we must look, therefore, for another solution of the apparent difficulty.

In examining more closely these divisions we find that they coalesce into two or three greater bodies or families.

Of those families, one is divided into endless smaller sects differing from the others and among themselves by the most vital and far-reaching differences; another, the largest, and, shall I say, the most influential of those bodies, is united among themselves and under their chief by the most absolute unity of belief and practice.

And if you inquire further into the origin and source of this difference in constitution and belief, you will find that it comes from the different methods employed in the imparting, or in the acquiring religious truth by those religious bodies—the one, the method of authoritative teaching backed up by a living tradition; as is attested by a luminous history of 1,900 years—the others all, however they may differ among themselves, or from the former, by the principle of *private interpretation of the written Word.* These different prin-

ciples being adopted by the one or the other body, it is no wonder that they differ in numberless points of doctrine and practice. It is no wonder, moreover, that the one body is entirely united, and that the other is divided into a thousand sects or subfamilies.

4. Now I come to a crucial point in our inquiry and ask, which body of Christians—the Catholic, or the non-Catholic, which takes in, as I have said, all the sects: which body is right and which is wrong (for both cannot be right) in its method of propounding or acquiring a knowledge of the religion of Christ? Which is the principle of authoritative teaching, assisted by the living tradition, as employed by the Catholic Church since her institution by the Apostles 1,900 years ago; or the principle of private interpretation of the written Word, invented by Luther; which, I ask, is the one authorized by Christ, its Founder?

It won't do to answer, as is commonly done, by saying that we are all journeying by different roads to the same home. That is only a catch cry invented in modern times—in very modern times—to cover over an insoluble difference of opinion. It is only a catch cry, I say, and like many catch cries, it contains a disastrous fallacy.

Christ, the Founder, speaks of only one road—a straight one—rough and thorny, and which is

entered by a narrow gate. It was the one He Himself traveled, the one He invites us to follow Him on. "If any one will come after Me, let him lead a life of self-denial; and bear patiently the crosses he meets in life; and so follow Me by the practice of the Christian virtues."

True, He speaks of another road, a great one, broad and smooth, and which is entered by a wide gate. It is the road of self-indulgence, and where the journeyers who are in throngs believe what they like, and do what they like, make pick and choice in the matters of belief, and are unto themselves a law; and so constitute an anarchy. Our Lord quite truly speaks of this thoroughfare, but not as leading to the home.

But let us face boldly the question—Which of the Christian bodies is right and which is wrong in its method of imparting or acquiring religious truths? for both cannot be right.

5. In examining this question we are confronted with some notable facts.

(1) Christ Himself never wrote a line of Scripture.

(2) He never commanded His disciples to write a line; what He did command His disciples to do was to preach and teach, "Go, teach all nations." "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

(3) If you inquire into the circumstances in

which the chief part of the New Testament, in which we are principally interested, was written; you will find that it, the written Testament, was an after-thought, as it were, in the make-up of Christianity; that each particular treatise of it was addressed to a people among whom the religion of Christ was established and functioning normally. That these treatises are in good part fragmentary in character; put together unscientifically, and without technical order, as the conditions of the churches to which they were addressed demanded; that some of the most important of these treatises were not written for a great many years after the Ascension. Thus, the Gospel of St. Luke was not written till 24 years after that great event. The Acts of the Apostles ends in the year 63. Some of the Epistles, and those the more important ones, were penned from 20 to 25 years—that is to say, a whole generation—after the Ascension. And the very important treatises, the Apocalypse and the Gospel of St. John, from sixty-three to sixty-four years after our Lord's Ascension.

(4) The Bible, as we know it today, compiled into a single book, did not exist in the Church for nearly four hundred years. Thus we see that many generations of Christians lived their lives and were sanctified before there was a Bible. The whole Bible, as we know it, was received for the first time

by the pastors of the Church in the councils of Hippo in Africa, A. D. 393, and of Carthage, A. D. 397. For you must take into account the circumstances of those early days. Communication was not by wireless, or telephone, as in our time. When St. Paul, for instance, wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, he sent it by special messengers on the coasting vessels along the towns of Greece and Epirus to the pastors of this Church, and it was instantly received with the respect it merited. After a time it was copied by the pastors of the neighboring churches of Asia. But not for long years, perhaps decades, was it recognized as authentic by the remote churches of Gaul, or Spain, or Africa, and so of the others.

Moreover, there was need of great caution in those days, for the churches were crammed with apocryphal gospels and epistles written in good part by the heretics who swarmed in the Church from the beginning.

(5) The Protestant method of private interpretation was simply impossible in the time of Christ and for many centuries after; and Christ as a practical teacher chose the sole method possible and practicable. For you must remember that in the time of our Lord the world was in great part illiterate.

(6) You are to remember, furthermore, that the

printing press was invented only in the fifteenth century. To write a Bible then would be a labor of many years; and when it was finished, it was full of mistakes of every kind.

To copy and disseminate the Bible was the achievement chiefly of the "lazy monks" of the "dark" or middle ages, a herculean work for which we can never be grateful enough to them; and it is concerning those days that the calumny is levelled of the Church's having chained the Bible. Yes, the Bible was chained in those days, just as—can we say it any longer—in these times of sanitary fads we chain the drinking cup at the village pump, so that it might be of advantage to all. A parish, for instance, was ambitious to be the possessor of a Bible. It was purchased by public subscription at the cost of what would be in our days several thousand dollars and then it was placed in a conspicuous position in the church, chained to the stand on which it rested to be read by anyone who desired it. Under these conditions it is plain to see that the Protestant method of private interpretation was impossible for fifteen hundred years of Christian history.

But once the printing press was invented, editions of the sacred writings began to be multiplied; and it is a silly story that Luther "discovered" the Latin Bible, and that he was the first to translate

it into German. As the Protestant *Church Times,* July 26, 1878, says: "The catalogue (of Bibles in the Caxton Exposition at South Kensington, 1878) will be very useful for one thing at any rate as *disproving the popular lie about Luther's finding the Bible* for the first time at Erfurt, about 1507. Not only were there many editions of the Latin Vulgate [i. e., the Bible in Latin, the very thing Luther is pretended to have discovered]; but there were actually *nine German editions of the Bible* in the Caxton Exhibition earlier than 1483, the year of Luther's birth. There were twenty-seven editions in German alone before Luther's Bible appeared."

And, lastly, the method of private interpretation is founded on a misconception of the sacred text. "Search the Scriptures," cried Luther, quoting our Lord's answer to the Pharisees; when the context, as well as the Greek verb employed, suggests the translation by the indicative—"you search the Scriptures"; and, even so, it relies for sanction on this single text alone.

No, dearly beloved, "no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation." (2 Peter I, 20.) And speaking of "our most dear brother, Paul . . . in all his epistles there are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." (2 Peter III, 15–16.)

II

I go on now to examine the Catholic method in the teaching of religion. It was the only possible method, I claim, considering the circumstances of the time (I might add, had I time to go into the proofs of it, that it is so still), the one customary in the teaching of religious truth from the beginning of the world. It was so, not only in the times anterior to Moses and before the Old Testament was written, but even in Jewish times down to that of our Lord. As it is said in the prophet Malachias: "The lips of the priest shall speak wisdom, and the people shall seek the law *at his mouth.*"

But in commanding the oral and authoritative method of teaching His religion our Lord could not entrust the precious pearl of His Word to the fallible and unaided minds of men. Every human institution bears in itself the seeds of corruption and decay; and everything brought to light as the result of human endeavor is perishable and suffers from the corroding action of time.

It is not so with the works of God. They are imperishable, fire tried, witnesses to His own unending existence.

This is especially the case with His masterpiece and spouse, the Church. She, the beloved of the Spouse, must be "all fair."

The Bride of Christ is to be "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,"—"without spot" of dishonor to mantle over her fair cheek; "without wrinkle" of old age or decrepitude to furrow her noble brow; "or any such thing," as suggests human fallibility or decay.

He would not, therefore, entrust her government in her great career to the fallible guidance of man. When, therefore, He said to the Apostles, "Go and teach all nations"; He added, "and behold I am with you all days, even to the end of time." I am in the midst of you to govern and direct you throughout the ages, and to protect you amid the trials and storms to come; even as formerly I was with you to allay the angry elements on the angry Sea of Galilee.

He said again: "I will ask the Father and He will send upon you the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, to teach you all truth, and to remain with you forever."

If then Christ promised to be with the Church "all days, even to the end of time"; if the Holy Spirit is to descend upon her and remain with her "forever"; I ask, can that Church fail in her mission of imparting His truth to mankind and fall into error? And is it, or is it not, a blasphemy and a calumny to suggest such a possibility? That Church was to be "the pillar and the ground of

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truth," according to the Apostle—the pillar, which sustained the whole edifice; nay, the very foundation in which truth should rest for all time. Could that pillar crumble under stress of trial; and could that foundation in time give way?

2. I come now to the culminating point of our inquiry. Do we see those fair promises of Christ realized in the Catholic Church? And does the earnest prayer of our Lord for unity among the members of His Church seem to be fulfilled in her, and in her, alone?

Now I am going to make a bold challenge; and I trust, my friends, that in making it, none of you will judge me guilty of arrogance or any other sentiment than that of the most beneficent and charitable zeal. Our Church has been before the world for the last 1,900 years. She has passed through every vicissitude of martyrdom and glory. She has felt the pulse of humanity in all its phases from the state of utter barbarism to the most advanced stage of civilization. She has been tried as it were by fire.

We are today three hundred and thirty millions of souls united as one man in faith, in obedience to our Supreme Head, in doctrine, in practice, in Sacraments, in Sacrifice, and in charity. Does it not seem that we have grown from the mustard seed to the great institution we are today? Has not

the exalted prayer of our Lord for unity among His disciples been realized in us? And have not Christ's promises been fulfilled in us? The Church has been, as I have said, before the world in the most public manner for the last 1,900 years. She has passed through every vicissitude of humiliation and glory; she has been tried in every manner.

We now challenge historians and scientific men of every age to show us in what that Church has departed a hair's breath from the truth of the doctrine confided to her by our Lord, or has fallen for once or for a moment into any shade of error. Understand me well, my friends, I am aware that she has been often accused by her enemies of having lapsed on many occasions into error, and as the English *Sacramentary* has it, of having been "steeped in damnable idolatry for a thousand years or more." But, as you know, my friends, it is one thing to make a malicious accusation against an institution; it is another thing to prove that accusation and to bring home conviction to the accused.

And if this be so, can we not say that she is today, as she has always been, among all those religions that pretend to come from Christ, "the city seated on the mountain top that cannot be hid"; "the mountain seated on the top of mountains,"

the one manifest creation and protegé of the Divine Founder?

And was it not with justice that that great thinker and statesman, the late Mr. Gladstone, himself a Protestant, said of her: "The Catholic Church has for the last 1,500 years marched at the head of civilization and has harnessed to her chariot as the horses of a triumphal car the chief intellectual and material forces of the world. Her art, the art of the world. Her genius, the genius of the world. Her greatness, glory, grandeur and magnificence, have been almost though not absolutely, all that in this respect the world has had to boast of. Her children are more numerous than all the children of the sects combined, and she every day extends the boundaries of her vast empire. Her altars are raised in every clime, and her missionaries are found wherever the evangel of eternity is to be preached and souls to be saved.

"And this wondrous church which is as old as Christianity, and as universal as mankind shows no signs of decay. Rather, is she as fresh, and as vigorous, and as practical as the day when the Pentecostal fires were showered on the earth."

DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN

I

DUTIES TO GOD

1. I have chosen for subject on which to address you this afternoon—the Duties of the Christian Man.

Now, what I mean by the Christian man is one who, making profession of the religion of Jesus Christ, tries to live up to the standard of morality which such a profession implies.

And at the outset I must credit you all, my friends, with the will to live up to that standard of morality, and to fulfill your duties as Christians.

Happy for yourselves and for the community that you have that will, and that you do endeavor to discharge your duties as Christians. What is the man who has not that will, and who does not try to live up to the standard of Christian morality? What is he? He is an incubus on the world, and one whom the world could get on very well without. He is a wastrel who is good for neither society nor country. He is a man whose presence

is a curse to any company he mingles in. His society is contamination, and he will leave his mark for evil upon those who frequent it. I leave that man aside, therefore. I speak not of him; I speak not to him this afternoon. My ministry might bring me into his company on another occasion. But at present I address myself to sincere Christian men and women who only desire to know their duties by God and by their fellowmen, in order to set themselves to fulfill them.

And I say that nature and religion impose on every Christian man—on every head of a family; for, I take the head of a family as the type of the full-blown Christian man—nature and religion impose on him four sets of duties; to his God, service, love, obedience; to this wife and family, fidelity; to his fellowmen, truthfulness, justice, charity, good example, respect and reverence; to his country, submission to her just laws and loyal service in her needs.

2. I say, in the first place, that nature and religion impose on the Christian man, service, love, obedience to his God. Need I prove it to you, my friends? It was for this we were all sent into the world. This is the great mission of every man. This was the purpose that actuated the mind of God in our creation—the only possible purpose. For God, although God, could not create man

except for the ultimate end of His own glory. Being the highest cause He could act only for the attainment of the noblest end; and the noblest end of His operations is, and could be, only His own glory. Man's duty to God, therefore, is paramount.

The service, the love, the obedience of every man to his God and Creator, must dominate in all his actions; must overlap and underlie; must permeate his whole life and conduct.

The permanent conviction of this his first and most essential duty must influence all his aims and enterprises, and must find its expression in every action that he does.

3. This same great truth, the duty of service, love, obedience to God is further brought home to the conviction of anyone who considers, be it ever so little, the great fact of our existence. I put it in this way—Here we find ourselves in the midst of life, you and I. Forty, sixty, a hundred years ago, we were not; and now we are. What is the purpose of our being? What, our end? We find ourselves endowed with the highest gifts of body and soul—gifts which raise us infinitely above the creatures that surround us, and which beget in us a likeness to God Himself. With body erect, face fronting heaven, we bear upon our

brow the impress and the dignity of the lords of creation. Our soul was made to the very image and likeness of God. Spiritual like Him, undying like Him, it has before it an eternal destiny.

Moreover, this soul of ours is gifted with transcendent powers—the faculties of mind and free will. This mind is capable of highest thought. It compasses all space and time. One instant it measures the movements and considers the qualities of the farthest spheres; another, it goes back to the beginning of time and studies primordial matter as it comes forth from the hand of the Creator; now, it reasons on the most hidden mysteries of nature; or, again, it lifts itself on high and contemplates God upon His throne.

Our will, offspring of God's most generous love, earth holds it not. It rises above all temporal things and aspires after the possession of the Supreme Good. By our free will we are raised infinitely above inanimate things and the brute creation, and are gifted with a true sovereignty over our actions; the ones are subject to invariable laws which they must obey; the others are impelled by invincible instinct in their operations. Only man has the power to will or not to will, to direct all his actions to an end.

Now, coming thus from God, thus gifted by

Him, still subject to Him by the most absolute dependency, the question is borne in upon us—what could be the purpose of the existence of creatures such as we? Has God sent us into this world to do as we please? Has He given us permission to employ those heaven-born faculties of mind and will as every impulse may dictate—thus making His image, which we are, the votaries of whatever idol passion may set up in the altar of our soul.

No, this cannot be, dearly beloved, for God is infinitely wise. He must, therefore, have had an end and an infinitely wise one in view in our creation. What is that end? What is the purpose that actuated the mind of God when He said: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness?" He has declared it in the first of His Commandments: "Thou shalt adore the Lord, thy God; Him only shalt thou serve"; and, "thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with all thy strength."

The permanent conviction, I say, of this, our first and most essential duty, the duty which we owe to God as our Lord and Creator, must influence all our aims and enterprises, and must find its expression in every action that we do.

II

DUTIES TO WIFE AND FAMILY

The second duty that a man owes in life is to his wife and family, and that duty is fidelity. This is a duty that appeals to every upright soul, to every man who follows the dictates of his rational nature, and only the wastrel and the depraved fail to give heed to its call: and it follows from the strict ties contracted by him through the sacred institution of Marriage.

Marriage according to the Christian dispensation has, says Cardinal Gibbons, four distinctive characteristics. It is the most ancient of all contracts, the most exclusive, the most sacred, the most inviolate and irrevocable.

It is the most ancient of all contracts; for, our first parents were the first contracting parties; the garden of Eden was the scene of the union; and God Himself was the minister and sole witness of the espousals.

It is the most exclusive of all contracts. For a husband can have but one wife, and a wife, but one husband; a third partner is wholly excluded in the Christian dispensation from sharing in the union; and no other marital union can take place until the

death of the one or the other of the original contractors, do them part.

It is the most sacred of all fellowships. For, the Eternal Father is its founder; Jesus Christ is its restorer and reformer; and the Holy Ghost is the divine fire that welds together two hearts in unquenchable love.

Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament—a great Sacrament, according to St. Paul. For it is the symbol of the union of Christ with His spouse the Church—and of the Divinity with our humanity in the Incarnation.

And, lastly, it is the most inviolable and irrevocable of all contracts that man ever formed.

Every other human contract may be lawfully dissolved, but not this. Nations may be justified in abrogating treaties with each other; merchants may dissolve partnerships; brothers will eventually leave the paternal roof and separate from one another; friends may be obliged to part company. But by the law of God, the bond uniting husband and wife can be dissolved only by death. For, "what God hath joined, no man may put asunder."

2. I am aware that outside the Catholic Church fidelity to the marriage vow is not looked upon as of indispensable necessity; and in some so-called churches the marriage tie seems to be very loose indeed. A man, for instance, may,

under certain circumstances, obtain a bill of divorce against his wife, and say to her that she may no longer share his habitation, that her place in his affections and solicitudes is given to another. But in the Catholic Church it is not so. When a young man leads a young woman to the altar and there takes her as his wedded wife, he is made to know that the act there registered is irrevocable. "What God hath joined, no man may put asunder." "For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, until death do them part," their destinies are linked in one. They are two in one bond of sympathy and love before Heaven and before the Church, as they are "two in one flesh," by their union in all things domestic.

You ask, why the necessity of inviolable fidelity to the marriage vow? Well, my brethren, I answer: laying aside supernatural reasons, that necessity exists chiefly in favor of the children who are to be born of their union. From the lawful union of man and wife God wills that our race be propagated; and this I say in contradiction to the foul teachings that often shock and offend us in the columns of our magazines and great dailies.

When the child comes into the world, it is a poor helpless thing, dependent entirely on the care of others for sustenance, and for the other necessaries that enable it to live and grow to the fullness

of its intellectual and bodily powers. Moreover, that child, as reason wakes within it, must be directed to aspire to, must be taught those truths and practices that enable it to attain to the supreme end of its existence—eternal life with God. The seeds of grace implanted in its soul at Baptism must be developed till the man of God be made to appear fully in the child of earth; and to bring about this is the united duty of father and mother.

Fidelity to the marriage vow it is that brings about the proper Christian rearing of the child, which is the true end of education, and the supreme duty of man as father—fidelity of the husband to the wife, and of the wife to the husband—fidelity of both to the children that are born of them. Without fidelity on the part of the man the children born to him are neglected; a superfluous burden is laid upon the mother; one of nature's fundamental laws is violated, which requires the co-operation of both parents in the rearing of their progeny.

3. This obligation of fidelity to wife and children extends to all relations of life. A man must look upon his wife as his other self. He must, therefore, sympathize with her in her sorrows and in her joys; provide for her in her wants; aid her in her needs; assuage her pains; console and com-

fort her through life; and be to her in all things guide, protector, and head.

Do we see men, married men, ordinarily fulfill this duty of fidelity to their wife and children? I do not doubt that the great bulk of the married men whom I see before me fulfill this duty; that all, or nearly all, make an honest effort to do so. But can we say, looking at society in general, as we see it here in this city, in this country, that men practise to perfection fidelity to their wives and children?

Ah, brethren, a little observation of family life dissipates the notion. For, how then do we find so much unhappiness in families? How do we find so many wretched wives who pine away their lives in loneliness and sorrow while the fathers of their children, the men who swore in the fervency of youthful love that they would be the darlings of their heart till death, live a dissipated life and spend their time and means in extravagance and debauchery?

My dear brethren, let me earnestly exhort you to give an example of Christian fidelity and devotion to your wives and families. This is required of you, as well by the command of God as Christian men and members of the Holy Catholic Church, as for the honor of your society which

is giving such noble proofs of Christian and civic worth, with such edification to the whole Church and nation. By so doing you will enhance the merits of your noble Order, bring the blessing of Heaven on you and them, and earn for yourselves the reward of eternal glory.

III

DUTIES TO SOCIETY

1. I now go on to the consideration of two other sets of duties binding on the Christian man—those that he owes to his fellow man, and those that he owes to his country.

And, first, those that he owes to his fellow man. What are the duties of the Christian man to his fellow man, to that great body of humanity which we call society?

It is a great question that has absorbed the life-long care and study of the greatest statesmen and prelates. Here we can touch only lightly on some of the principal points or headings.

When we look out on that great welter of humanity in this, as in almost every other Christian country, we find that it labors under innumerable evils; and those evils, instead of being alleviated by the advance of science, and that form of

savagery which they call material progress, are seen everywhere to be on the increase; so that we may say of it in the words of the prophet that "the whole head is sick and the whole heart is sad." I need not remind you of the wretched condition of the poor in our slums and alleys; nor of the hard, cheerless lives eked out by working men and women of many trades and avocations; nor of the disability and sufferings to which child life is exposed; nor of the hardships of the sick and poor; nor of the drab existence of poor working people who try to make a living for themselves and their little ones. Neither need I bring to your recollection the moral evils that exist in society.

Read the great journals of our cities day by day. What do their columns contain but a daily catalogue of crimes the most shocking and unnatural? Now it is of theft on a colossal scale; now, of murder and rapine; now, of awful immorality, as if the sluice-gates of hell with all its abominations were let open; now, of wholesale and interlocking scandal, of which the young and the unprotected are most often the victims. And all this because the duties of the individual, of the man, of the nominally Christian man, are violated or left unfulfilled. What are those duties, I repeat?

2. When I say that truthfulness, justice, char-

ity, good example, and respect and reverence for others make up the sum of man's duties to his fellow man, I say what is but in accordance with reason and Christian teaching.

When God willed human society to exist, He willed that certain principles of conduct should influence that society, without which in fact society could not exist, and intercourse of man with man should come to a standstill; and those principles are, truthfulness in word, justice in action, charity in all things, good example, and respect and reverence for others.

Truthfulness, I say, for God is the God of truth. It is one of His primary attributes and a reflection of this truth He demands in the action of His intelligent creatures in their intercourse with one another; and hence, the commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

Justice, which standeth by the throne of God and which demands of us uprightness and honor in our dealings with our fellow men. We are not then to take an unfair advantage of our neighbor in his weakness, incompetence, or inexperience in affairs, but must treat him honorably and squarely; and in this sense it has been well said that "an honest man is the noblest work of God."

Charity in all things, a principle which would have us treat others as we would that others treat

us; and here let me recall the many opportunities we all have of fulfilling this great Christian duty in a world saddened by many and grievous ills.

Good example. We must "so let our light shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven."

And, lastly, respect and reverence for all, especially the young. St. Paul says of every upright Christian man that he is the "temple of God," and a "member of the mystical body of Jesus Christ." This is enough to remind us of the reverence and respect with which we should treat others. It should remind us especially of the reverence and respect we should have for the young, so that we may never disedify or scandalize them by unworthy words or conduct. Our Lord Himself strongly inculcates this, and pronounces woe, that is, inevitable destruction on those who scandalize the little ones that believe in Him, by sinful words or actions.

3. This, dearly beloved, is a summary of the principles of conduct that should actuate us in our dealings with our fellow men. If those principles are wanting in our conduct; if they are not manifested in our dealings with others; there is an end of social relations. If every man tells lies to his neighbor, tries to deceive him in word, seeks to circumvent him in his enterprises, hates him in

his heart, disedifies him by unseemly words and conduct, disregards him; then I say, there can be no social intercourse; society is disarranged; humanity is but an aggregation of units; all system and order is overturned; earth is become a reflection of that place of torture where "everlasting horror and confusion dwells."

It becomes every man's duty, therefore, to exhibit those qualities in his relations with his fellow men—to be truthful in his words; to act justly and honorably by every man with whom he comes in contact; to love every one, whether he be friend or stranger, and to assist him when he can in his distress; to edify him and pay him respect and reverence as a child of Jesus Christ; and thus, if he cannot fill up the measure of human happiness, try at least to lighten the burden of human woe.

IV

DUTIES TO HIS COUNTRY

1. The last duty man owes is to his country; and here also the obligation is grave and pressing.

It has been well said that just as the family is the unit of the nation; so, also, the nation is the aggregate of the family. The joys or ills, the suc-

cesses or the failures that affect the one, affect the other also.

If a man, therefore, has duties and responsibilities to his family and to his immediate friends; if he has duties and responsibilities to his neighbor and to society; he has duties and responsibilities also to his country, to the state, which is but the generalization of society; and these duties and these responsibilities that he owes the state are paramount, inasmuch as its interests are the more important, and its welfare is the more necessary to be secured.

What, then, are the duties of a man, of the Christian man, to his country? They are comprised, I have said, in obedience to her just laws, and honorable service to her needs; and this service in times of great stress amounts even to the offering up of his life.

We meet sometimes with fervent patriots who in their exuberance of sentiment boldly proclaim that they would give their lives for their country, and who look upon everyone who does not share in their perfervid views, it may be, on great questions of the day, such as preparedness, and international action, as cowards, and mollycoddles, and traitors, and hyphenates, and so forth. Let us hope that in time of need the acts of those

worthies would prove the stability of their words. But without giving much attention to blatant patriotism with which we are so familiar, allow me to remind you of a thing that is not generally recognized and that is: that patriotism is not a mere human sentiment, high and honorable though it may be; that it is a virtue to which every man is obliged; and that our great Catholic theologians place it as the second of the moral virtues in honor and worth; that it is a duty pressing upon us all to be ready to offer our life in the service of our country, and, if need be, to lay down that life in defense of our country's honor or in remedying her ills. How magnificently our Catholic boys have responded to that duty and have offered their lives in response to their country's call in her hour of trial, it needs no words of mine to say.

2. But irrespective of this heroic duty, the occasion for discharging which does not occur in the lifetime of every man, let me remind you of a duty we are frequently called upon to fulfill, and that is, the duty of electing fit and proper representatives to legislate for the welfare of the community at large, and to look after the interests of the nation.

It is an axiom in theology that man is accountable to God for his every wilful thought, and act, and word; and according as his thoughts, and acts,

and words are regulated according to the law of conscience, which is the practical expression of the eternal law of God implanted in his soul, or are opposed to it, he will receive sentence of condemnation or reward hereafter.

Now, if there is an occasion when this accountability of man to God and to the law of conscience becomes grave and pressing, it is when he goes forth in the plenitude of his privileges as a citizen to register his vote for the man or for the political party who are to share or to exercise sovereign power over the lives and destinies of the whole people. The man therefore, vested with the privilege of the franchise, is to exercise that privilege with the consciousness of his accountability to the law of conscience, and with the remembrance that he will have to answer before God hereafter for the vote which he has registered. He is therefore to give his vote not blindly in the interest of this faction or that faction; this political party or that political party which seeks his suffrage; but calmly to study and examine the principles that influence them and the objects which they wish to see attained, and then, with the consciousness that he is discharging a grave and responsible duty to the whole people, give his vote in favor of the man or of the party that in his heart of hearts he judges best disposed, and most capable to frame

just laws for the welfare of religion and society.

3. Again, a man is bound to yield a due submission to the just laws of his country.

It is a principle that all authority is from God who wishes order in the commonwealth. "By Me," says He, through the mouth of the Wise Man, "kings rule and lawgivers enact just laws." Hence, St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, exhorts all Christians, saying: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for, there is no power but from God, and those that are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power resisteth the order of God; and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."

This is not the place to discuss the circumstances that may sometimes arise which justify a man in giving a passive resistance to the law, or even in contradicting the law as it is enacted, or as it is administered; for a manifestly unjust enactment cannot be dignified with the name of law, or reverenced as a law, no matter by what authority enacted; but I say that in normal circumstances the law is to be presumed as just; and if it press more heavily on one class of the community than on another, constitutional means are to be adopted for the removal of the grievance, and only when all constitutional means fail, and the grievance be-

comes intolerable is open resistance to the constituted authority lawful or justifiable. The adoption of violent and illegal methods, therefore, for the redress of ordinary grievances, especially when the adoption of such methods brings hardship and wrong on the neighbor, is unjust and a crime before the world and before heaven.

4. These, dearly beloved, are a summary of the duties of the Christian man towards God, towards his wife and family, towards his neighbor, and towards his country.

Do we find these duties fulfilled ordinarily by the general run of men in this country? Ill would be the day for us all—for society and religion—if men were not found, and in very large numbers, who make an honest effort to discharge those duties; and the history of our country points out the career of many illustrious citizens whose lives were a display of the highest Christian principles.

But there are to be found men, and in considerable numbers too, who fail in the effort and in the will to their fulfillment. Else, how is there to be found so much misery among families and individuals? Why is society so much deranged? Why is there such sharp conflict between class and class? Why is there so much hardship on the one hand; so much luxury on the other? Why is there

such unfeeling uncharitableness and want of sympathy in those who could and ought to benefit the sufferer?

But give me the sincere Christian man, upright, moral, sober, prayerful; the man guided in all things by conscience, sensible of his responsibility for all his thoughts, and acts, and words; give me a community of such men, and I will do marvels; I will lift up society; I will regenerate the nation.

ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE HOLY NAME SOCIETY

I

1. The present appears to me a fitting occasion to lay before you the objects of the Holy Name Society. And this I am the more inclined to do, because of the feeling I have that many join religious societies, and remain members of them for months and years, without having any clear notion of the end for which such societies are established.

As a consequence, they never labor zealously for, or even aspire towards the attainment of that end. Many, I fear, are of opinion that the sole purpose of a religious society is to induce a number of men or women to come once a week, or once a month, as the case may be, to the church to hear a religious instruction, and to join in certain devotions and the chanting of hymns, and to receive the Sacraments on stated occasions; and that when they have complied with those conditions, nothing more is expected of them. Now, this would be a very inadequate notion of the scope and purpose of a

religious society; and if this were all it were intended to achieve, it might as well almost never have been established.

2. Allow me then to tell you that every religious society has a twofold object in view; the one a general object, if I may so speak, which is common to all; the other, a special one which is peculiar to each society.

The general object of every sodality is the spiritual well-being of the members themselves; and this object they attain to by a zealous use of the helps to piety offered them in their respective sodalities. These helps are the blessing and approval of the Church, and the conferring of its indulgences; the practice of special prayers sanctified by that Church; religious instruction; mutual edification and encouragement; above all, the frequent reception of the Sacraments and the daily practice of works of Christian piety inculcated on all the members.

These, dearly beloved, are the ordinary helps given to members of a religious society to attain their sanctification; and if they are assiduous in availing themselves of them, they cannot fail to achieve that object.

On the contrary, if these helps are not made use of by members individually or collectively, the presence of their names on the roll book will be of

little advantage to them. Nay, regular attendance even at the meetings will be of little use, if the other helps to sanctification be not employed. It will avail you little, I say, to attend regularly at the monthly meetings of this Sodality, if you do not receive the Sacraments regularly, and if you do not refrain from sinful works, and diligently apply yourselves to the practice of prayer and works of Christian piety.

I have said that, besides the general object which is common to all religious societies, there is a special object which is peculiar to each; and of the special object of our Sodality I wish to say some words.

The special object of the Holy Name Society is, in the first place, the veneration of the august name of Jesus. This, the history of its institution makes clear to us. For we are told that at the general council of Lyons, celebrated 1274 A. D., and presided over by the reigning Pontiff, Gregory X, the fathers, assembled with a view of checking the widespread profanation of the sacred Name and the habit of blasphemy common among all classes, directed that the fathers of the Dominican Order, then one of the most influential bodies in the Church, preach against and put down the horrid custom. This led later on, and notably on the occasion of the great plague which raged in Lisbon,

A. D. 1432, to the institution of a society which should have for its object the veneration of the Sacred Name of Jesus. This society, in due time instituted and solemnly approved by the Church and enriched with copious indulgences, became for long coterminous in its influence with the Dominican Order itself, whose apostolic activities extended to every region of the known world; and it continues its sanctifying work in the Church down to the present day.

3. How grand, how excellent is the object of this Society, needs no eloquent words to describe. For if, as is true, a society, be it religious, or social or political, derives its chief dignity from the object it has in view; how grand, how honorable the Sodality which has for its object the veneration of the sacred Name of Jesus? Suffice it to say that no grander object can be imagined, and that the veneration of the Sacred Name is the holiest employment a creature can be engaged in; since it is the veneration of the Name proper to the Son of God as Saviour of the world.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to St. Joseph he said to him: "Fear not, Joseph, son of David, to take unto thee Mary thy wife. For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His

name, Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins."

The Name of Jesus is then the most venerable ever pronounced by creature; and it brings to our mind all the Saviour did for us, and the purpose of the Incarnation and the Passion. What was that purpose? Why did the Son of God come down from Heaven and become Man? "It was to save us," says the Nicene Creed. Why did He who, having the nature and form of God, and "who did not," as St. Paul says, "think it a usurpation to make Himself equal to God"; why did He annihilate Himself even so far as to take the nature and form of a servant? It was to save us. Why did He "humble Himself, rendering Himself obedient to death, even to the death of the cross?" It was to save us. It was to form us by His example that He lived. It was to instruct us that He spoke. It was to sanctify us that He suffered. It was to redeem us that He died. And it was to crown His humiliations and His sufferings, says St. Paul, that God the Father "has given Him a Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

Name of Jesus, I repeat, which brings to our

mind all the benefits of the Redemption! "Name," to use the words of the Psalmist, "the most admirable on the whole earth!" Divine Name, which "no man can pronounce with becoming reverence except by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost!" Name of power, which is terrible to the devils, and by the strength of which have been worked the most astounding miracles! Salutary Name, in virtue of which we receive the graces of the Sacraments! Efficacious Name, which gives us access to the Father in prayer. "Name," says St. Peter, "than which there is none under heaven given to men by which they may be saved!" Name, infinitely glorious for Jesus Christ, infinitely consoling to Christians! Name which made the saints find joy even in tribulations, and glory in reproaches! Name, sweeter than the most exquisite perfume! Name, which alone is our hope and our joy; or, as it is so beautifully expressed in the hymn of St. Bernard, so often sung in our churches:

"Jesus, thy Name inspires my mind
With springs of life and light;
More than I ask in Thee I find,
And languish with delight.

No sound, no harmony so gay
Can art of music frame;
No thoughts can reach; no words can say,
The sweets of Thy best Name."

II

1. But if the primary object of the Sodality is the veneration of the Sacred Name, its ultimate and adequate object is the veneration of the Sacred Person of Jesus Christ, which this Sacred Name represents.

This is seen as well in the circumstances which led to the promulgation of the devotion, as in those which gave occasion to the institution of the society; and here again we are shown how excellent is the society, and how comprehensive in its aims. How comprehensive is the scope of this devotion which has for its object the worship of the Sacred Person of Jesus Christ? Let us say, in a word, that there is nothing more comprehensive in religion itself. It takes in the entire worship of Jesus Christ, God and man; and as the worship of Jesus Christ is the soul of religion and the essence of Christianity; the devotion embodied in the Sodality of which you have the honor of being members, embraces the whole of Christianity.

And here I want to bring home to you this important fact, that it is not without its providential significance that the wondrous revival of devotion to the sacred Person of Jesus Christ which we have witnessed in our days, and especially in our country, is taking place. It seems to be designed by God

as a movement of reparation to our Lord for the daily blasphemies to which He is subjected. For, outside the Catholic Church, as you are aware, in our country, and in every country where Protestantism has got a hold, the Divinity of the sacred Person of Jesus Christ is questioned, nay, openly and daringly denied, by men who still call themselves Christians. To make reparation for those blasphemies God has willed that this great society should spread and flourish.

As a result we see those wondrous rallies of the members of the Holy Name Sodality, where thousands and tens of thousands of earnest and pious men, the cream of Christian manhood, go in procession with lights and banners and every religious accompaniment, to proclaim their allegiance to and their veneration for Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the center of Christian faith and worship.

Another remark I have to make, and I shall be brief; it is, that this wondrous organization of the Christian forces seems to be as a providential preparation for conflict and persecution to come. He who is a keen observer of the times cannot but see that outside the Catholic Church there is a sharpening of swords and a preparation for conflict. It may be, and is, that the great Captain Himself is organizing the Christian forces to meet the trial; and therefore, He Himself has lifted the ban-

ner under which the Christian hosts are to march to victory and empire for the King of Glory.

III

1. But how are you to attain this object? I answer, by making Jesus Christ the study of your lives, and by practising the virtues of which He has left us the example. When the Saviour said to His disciples after the Last Supper: "I have given you an example, that as I have done, you also should do," He did not mean merely that they should imitate Him in His sublime act of humility by washing one another's feet. His will was rather that they should make the virtues that He taught them the practice of their lives.

So also I say that those who would compass in themselves the objects proposed to them in this Society should make Jesus Christ and Him crucified their daily study, and should set themselves earnestly to copy His virtues. They should study to be chaste as He was chaste; to be "meek and humble of heart"; to practise charity towards one another; to be pious, temperate, forgiving, patient, generous, obedient; and in general, to set an example to all men in the practice of the Christian virtues.

2. Brethren of the Society of the Holy Name of Jesus, see what you are called on to perform by the

fact of your giving your names to this society. You are called on to make a practice of the Christian virtues such as they are exemplified in the life and Passion of Jesus Christ. You are called on to exemplify in your lives in the face of a wicked world the virtues of a practical Christianity.

Today, and in our own country, as five hundred years ago in the old world when this Society was formed, Jesus Christ has His enemies, and they are a wicked society banded together by the devil to destroy morality among men, and to contradict the doctrines He taught us. Today, as five hundred years ago, the Sacred Name of Jesus is profaned by bad Catholics, who not only introduce this most venerable of all Names in blasphemous oaths and curses, but bring discredit on the religion of Christ by the scandal of their lives. Today, as five hundred years ago, the sacred Person of Jesus Christ is outraged by blatant irreligion which is only too often flaunted in social centres, in political assemblies, and in economic platforms; the virtues that He left us the example of are despised, and examples of Christian integrity are becoming rare among men. Today, in the world, Christian morality is no longer recognized for what it is. Its most holy practices are flouted. The laws themselves of this nominally Christian country are in many re-

spects paganized. The teaching of religion is banished from our public schools.

It will be your privilege and your duty to uphold the sacred name of religion among your fellow men. It will be yours, to have a special veneration for the sacred Name and Person of Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law, the soul of religion, the centre of Christianity. It will be yours to strive that the laws of Christian morality be upheld. It will be yours, I say, to edify the world by giving it the example of a body of practical Catholics living in the world, yet not of the world; holding up to it the spectacle of men who, whilst they fulfill their civil and social duties; whilst they exercise the functions of good citizens, will in their private lives and in their public conduct, reflect honor on the Christian name, and be the glory of the Church; who, whilst they live in the world, will show that their hearts are in heaven.

Eight hundred years ago the world stood astonished at the spectacle of the nations of Christendom banding themselves together as one man and precipitating themselves with the force of an earthquake shock upon the lands of the infidels who dared to offer insult to the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Today, not the Lord's Sepulchre, but the Lord Jesus Himself and His holy laws are tram-

pled under foot by Christians themselves; and those who should be the devoted followers of Christ, fold their arms and look on.

Yours, then, members of the Society of the Sacred Name, a more glorious cause than that which roused Christendom against the Saracens. Yours, to uphold on every occasion and on every field the glorious cause of Jesus Christ, and the triumph of His Sacred Name.

Soldiers of Christ; standard bearers of the Cross; upholders of the honor due to the Sacred Name, be true to this glorious cause! And though your numbers be comparatively few, still can you achieve great things with the help of the omnipotent God. For, "if the Lord be with us, who is against us?" "He who trusteth in the Lord is as Mount Sion; he shall never be moved." And though your success may not be apparent to all the world, and though you may have to labor here in the obscurity of faith and hope; yet a day shall come when your expectation shall not be delayed, and you shall receive a crown of justice from the Eternal King, and you shall be awarded a name of dignity and honor amid the choirs of the Church Triumphant.

OPPORTUNITIES OF GRACE

"And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children that are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." (Luke XIX, 41–44.)

I

1. This passage from St. Luke's Gospel tells us of one of the saddest and most pathetic episodes in all Scripture: that, namely, of our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem. Some in reading over the history of the Passion are moved at the spectacle of the agony in the Garden; the scourging; the crowning with thorns; the crucifixion. But all this was the outcome of the Saviour's tender and generous love; whereas, dearly beloved, in reading the passage which tells us of His weeping over Jerusalem we are confronted with the spectacle of His despair.

The event took place on the occasion of His solemn entry into the city, on the afternoon of Palm Sunday. It was only a few days before that the Saviour had performed the most striking miracle of His career, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. All Jerusalem and Judea were moved. Along the slopes of Olivet, and in the ravines encircling the city to the East and South, and out beyond as far as the eye could reach, were congregated in their hundreds of thousands, Jews from all countries of the known world. They came in preparation for the Pasch, which was to be celebrated a few days hence within the precincts and in the environs of the holy city. The solemn entry had been prepared. Jesus is seen riding on the ass's colt, as was foretold of the Messias. His followers cut down branches of fig and olive trees to grace the procession. In their enthusiasm many take off their garments and strew them in the way by which He is to go, and cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" The top of Olivet is reached, when, behold, beyond the ravine of Kedron stands the holy city, its gilded domes and snowy ramparts and palaces bathed in the noonday sun, a picture of peace and prosperity. The people were elated as perhaps never before; for now they thought Jesus was about to declare Himself the Messias and inaugurate a reign of worldly splendor

that should outrival that of Solomon, the golden age of Jewish greatness.

But far different were the thoughts that occupied the mind of the Saviour, who saw, as only a God can see, that behind this brilliant covering of religion the Jewish leaders and people were corrupt to the core, and that they were about to cast aside wilfully the last visitation of love and mercy sent them by their God.

The thought overcame Him and, not in silent tears, but in loud lamentations that were heard by all, He gave voice to His grief: "Oh, if thou also had known, even in this the eleventh hour of God's merciful dealing with thee, the things that are to thy peace. But now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and encompass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children that are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

2. 'Tis true that God mercifully visited this proud and wilful people many a time when they had fallen away from His love and service. He repeatedly sent them His prophets and holy men to warn them against the consequences of their sins. But His prophets they killed, and His holy men

stoned, and the people persevered blindly in their evil ways. Of their bad treatment of His servants Jesus Himself complains only a day or two afterwards: "Behold, I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them you will put to death and crucify; and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not!" And then addressing the Pharisees: "Behold, your house," that is to say, your temple, no longer mine, "shall be left to you desolate."

3. Such, dearly beloved, were the prophecies of our Saviour against the fated city with its blinded inhabitants; and how swift and terrible the fulfillment! When our Lord was ascending wearily the dolorous way of Calvary, many women came to meet Him, and with feminine tenderness to express to Him their compassion in His sufferings. And the Saviour, touched at their sympathy, turned round and addressed them, saying: "Women of Jerusalem, weep not for me, for I go to suffer of my own free will and choice; but weep for yourselves and for those little ones that you carry in your arms; for they shall have to bear the penalty

of their fathers' sins." Only forty years later, when those children were in the fullness of manhood and womanhood, all those prophecies were fulfilled to the letter. For in that year the Roman army under Titus and Vespasian appeared before the city; and they built a wall around it, and shut up its inhabitants as in a prison. And in the eight months of that dread siege the famine was so great that women were seen to eat the flesh of their own children. And the stench coming from the bodies of the dead was so great that it poisoned the whole neighborhood for miles around. And not less than eleven hundred thousand of the people perished. And the city with the temple was burned to the ground, so that the former inhabitants on their return could scarcely make out where the foundations stood.

Nor was this all; for the ruthless conquerors took the remnants of the people, and sixty thousand of them they slew by the sword. And the rest, numbering seventy thousand, they carried captives to Rome to grace the conqueror's triumph. And afterwards as slaves they put them to build the theaters and palaces of the imperial city, where their descendants are to be seen to this day.

Nor is even this the end. For the blood of the Saviour which the leaders and the people called down upon themselves and their children has fallen

as the bolt of heaven upon them and has blasted them to this day; so that now we see them scattered among all nations, without country, without temple, without priest, without altar, as if God had cast them forth from His bosom, saying: "Go, wandering sheep, and wander over the whole earth to be hated and despised by all, and to be a monument to the severity of My judgments. How often would I have gathered you as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and you would not. You did not know on the day of my merciful visitation the things that were to your peace."

Such, dearly beloved, are the causes that led to the rejection of the Jewish people by Almighty God; the Saviour's prophecies, and their fulfillment.

II

1. This history has for us all a serious import; for, even as it is said in the epistle of today in reference to events in the early history of the Israelites, so may it be said of this history,—"these things were done in figure"; and they have an immediate application to us all. For Jerusalem with its blinded inhabitants is a type of the faithless soul and of the punishment that awaits it for its sins. And just as God mercifully visited the Israelites with special graces at many epochs of their history,

so also does He visit each individual soul with special calls and graces at different periods of its life. In the early morning of its career, when reason dawns on the little boy or girl, be that child pagan, Jew, or Christian, God illumines the soul with His graces, gives it a horror of sin, and calls it to a life of virtue. And if the soul is faithful to the first grace, that fidelity will be for it the beginning of a career of holiness which the same God will tenderly nourish in it till, as in the case of the saints, He leads it to the goal of perfect sanctity.

Again, He visits with His special graces the young man and woman as they enter on the period of adolescence, and when the world with its illusions and temptations as a well-laid and appetizing table is set before them; and He says to them in the midst of their heart: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, and the years draw nigh of which thou shall say: they please me not; before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars be darkened, and the clouds return after the rain; . . . before the silver cord be broken, and the golden fillet shrink back, and the pitcher be crushed at the fountain, and the wheel be broken on the cistern, and the dust return into the earth from whence it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it." (Eccl. XII, 1–7)

But not alone in the early morning of life, or in

adolescence, does God mercifully visit us with His grace. He visits us also in the noontide of life, when we are occupied with cares and responsibilities, and again in our declining years. Nay, even at the eleventh hour God visits us with His calls and graces, sometimes by the interior voice of conscience, sometimes through the words of a preacher, or the reading of a good book which we take up; or, it may be, through some grief or loss that comes upon us.

2. But *remember* (and this is the moral that we must draw from this whole discourse): we must not let those opportunities of grace pass by without laying hold of them, and this to the whole extent of our ability; for if they once pass by, never again will they return; they will have entered into the eternity of God. We must not treat those calls of grace like the unfaithful Jews who rushed blindly to their doom. For if we do, and if we persevere like them in a life of sin; as surely as there is a God in heaven, the days shall come upon us also; and the infernal enemy will cast a trench of his wiles about us; and he will compass us around, and straiten us on every side; and he will beat us flat to the ground, and the children that are in us; that is, our acts that shall accompany us; and there shall not remain in our lives a stone upon a stone of that edifice of worldly prosperity and happiness we had

pictured for ourselves; because we shall not have known the time of our visitation.

Rather we must fly to the Lord and take refuge under His protecting hand, as the chickens take refuge from the storm, or from the bird of prey, under the wings of the mother bird. He will protect us, and watch over us, and teach us to give Him a loyal love and service, which will be for us our happiness and joy in life and the pledge of a happy eternity in the hereafter.

THE REAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST

THE DOCTRINE STATED

"The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son," etc. (Matt. XXII, 1–14.)

I

1. By the marriage spoken of in this parable is signified the union of Christ with His Church, which was effected on Calvary, and the banquet prepared on the occasion denotes the call of the Jews to the faith. After their rejection of that call Jesus turned to the Gentile peoples, who received it with joy and honored it with their presence and devotion.

But the parable has also a secondary and subordinate meaning, and it refers to the mystery of the most Holy Eucharist which was instituted in connection with the same marriage. As this view has a more practical application for us, the children of the Gentiles, I will, with your forbearance, devote this discourse to the consideration of the mystery;

and I wish to show you what we ought to believe touching the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

The Eucharist is a Sacrament which contains really, truly, and substantially the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine. The holy fathers and doctors of the Church have given it different names, according to the different relations under which it may be considered.

They call it "the most adorable, the most august Sacrament," because it not only contains grace like the other Sacraments; but it contains the Author of all graces.

They call it "the most holy Sacrament of the Altar," because it is upon our altars that this great Mystery is accomplished, and our Lord resides there personally, as in the abode of His glory.

They call it "the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," because it is truly a Sacrifice and a Sacrament at the same time.

They give it the name of "Communion" and "Viaticum," because, being distributed among the faithful, it has the power of uniting them among themselves by the bonds of a perfect charity; "Viaticum," because being given to the dying it makes them pass happily from this life to a holy eternity.

Finally, they call it the "Bread of angels," the

"Bread of children," the "Hidden Manna," the "Table of the Lord," the "Sacred Banquet," names which belong to it perfectly; as also many others, the explanation of which I need not delay on.

2. Let us now see the marvels and miracles which are operated in this great Sacrament, and which are the object of our faith. The priest, honored with the sacerdotal character which is ineffable, deputed by the Church, and clothed with the sacred vestments, celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He performs at first a great number of prayers and holy ceremonies, and being come to the moment of Consecration, he takes bread, and it is no longer in his own person that he speaks and acts, but in the Person of Jesus Christ. For he does not say: "This is the Body of Jesus Christ," but, "This is My Body." In the same way, in the Consecration of the chalice, he does not say: "This is the Blood of Jesus Christ," but, "This is the chalice of My Blood, which shall be shed for the salvation of men"; and on the instant that those words are pronounced, the entire substances of the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord. That is what the church calls "Transubstantiation," that is to say, a change from one substance into another.

Though the substances of the bread and wine are changed, the accidents, as they call them, of color,

taste, figure, and so forth, remain; and this by a miracle of God's power which sustains them independently of their subjects, and contrary to their natures.

Moreover, the Body and Blood of the Saviour subsist after a spiritual manner and superior to the condition of material substances, even as did our Lord's sacred Body after the Resurrection, and they subsist whole and entire in each particle of the species.

Jesus Christ is truly offered in sacrifice to the Father in an unbloody manner, and He is consumed without suffering in His Person.

Although by the force of the words of Consecration the Body and Blood alone are present, nevertheless, by concomitance, as they say, that is, by a necessary accompaniment, the Body and Blood, Soul and Godhead are under each species; and the Father and the Holy Ghost are united to them in a particular manner, although they are not present sacramentally. O Jesus, we firmly believe that Thou art here truly present in the Sacrament of the Altar. We adore Thee as our Lord and Saviour. We thank Thee for all Thy past benefits. We thank Thee especially for all the graces Thou hast prepared for us in this Sacrament. Grant, we beseech Thee, that our love for Thee may increase daily more and more, even to that blessed time when we may be

permitted to possess Thee eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven.

II

PROOFS FROM THE SCRIPTURE

3. I have asserted the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, Body and Blood, Soul and Godhead, in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. You will ask, what grounds we have to render our faith firm and unmovable on this great mystery.

We have grounds which put it above all suspicion and uncertainty; grounds which remove from our mind even the least appearance of doubt. These are the Sacred Scriptures, the decisions of the Church, and the belief of the faithful in all ages.

As to the Holy Scriptures, we can have nothing stronger or more clear and precise than the words of our blessed Lord on this subject. And, in fact, if He had undertaken to convince us of this truth, could He explain Himself more clearly than He has done? To Luther, at least, it seemed quite evident that He could not. In one of his later works he says: "I should have wished to deny the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, in order to confound the

Papists. But so clear and strong are the words of Scripture which establish it, that in spite of my inclination so to do, and though I strained every nerve to reach the point, yet I could never persuade myself to doubt or deny it."

Hear then with respect the words of our Divine Saviour: "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." (John VI, 53–8.)

The Jews who were present, hearing those words, said to one another (just as non-Catholics in our own day say): "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Does our Blessed Lord explain away what He had said before? Does He tell us that He meant His flesh was to be eaten only in figure; that the bread and wine of Communion were only a figure, a representation of His adorable body and blood, as we are told by Protestants today? Oh, no; far from it! He confirms what He had said before, and explains Himself in more precise language, if more precise language were possible. More than that, He confirms His former statement by a most solemn oath, and tells them plainly that if they do not believe His words they shall never taste the sweets of eternal life. "Amen, amen, I say to you" (and this

formula, according to the custom of the Jews, signified a most solemn oath), "except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." He confirms it again and again, in stronger and yet stronger language. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day; for," He continues, "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed! He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him." "As the living Father," He continues still, "hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." (John VI, 53–8.)

And in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, see how He explains Himself when speaking to His disciples. "Taking bread, He blessed it and broke and gave to them, saying: take and eat; *This* is My Body."

Taking also the cup full of wine, "He blessed it and gave to His disciples, saying: drink ye all of this; for *this* is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for the remission of sins." (Matt. XXVI, 26–27; Mark XIV, 22–23; Luke XXII, 19–20.)

Now, what could be more clear and precise than this? Can words convey an idea in more forcible

and precise language? And how can there be found minds so shallow as to take those words in a figurative sense?

Hear again St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "For, lo," he says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (the great Apostle, we are to remember, was specially instructed by our Lord during his sojourn in the desert of Arabia) "that the Lord Jesus the same night on which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat; This is My body which shall be delivered for you; this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice after He had supped, saying: This chalice is the New Testament in My blood; this do as often as ye shall drink for the commemoration of Me. For, as often as ye shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For, he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself not discerning the body of the Lord." (I Cor. XI, 23–29.)

"This is My body that shall be delivered for you. This is My blood of the New Testament. Whosoever eateth this bread and drinketh the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." How can a man be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord by receiving and eating unworthily that which is but a figure of the Lord? Is a man guilty of the body and of the blood of his fellow man if he outrages that which is a figure of that man? if he burns his effigy, or otherwise dishonors it? No, my friends, men who argue thus are trifling with our Lord's words; they, in the words of St. Peter, "twist the Sacred Scripture to their own damnation."

Let us not imitate the perversity of those blind dupes led by the blind guides of "private interpretation" and "rational interpretation of the Scriptures," nor the incredulity of the carnal Jews, who turn away from our blessed Lord, saying "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" "This is a hard saying and who can believe it?" Let us rather bind ourselves the closer to the spouse of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church, which the Apostle describes as "the pillar and the ground of truth," proposing this truth to us, and say with the Prince of the Apostles: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

III

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH AND THE BELIEF OF THE FAITHFUL

1. I now go on to show the doctrine of the Real Presence from the teaching of the Church and from the belief of the faithful in all ages. As to that teaching and that belief, they are evident and without reply: "Whoever shall say," says the Catholic Church teaching by the Council of Trent, "that in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of bread and wine remain together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." (*Con. Trid.*, Sess. XIII, c. 4.) Here are a few of the sayings of the great Fathers of the early Church on this mystery, sayings which might be multiplied a hundredfold, were such testimony required: "With all certitude," says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who lived in the fourth century, "with all certitude we receive the body and blood of Christ. For under the species of bread is given to you His body, and under the species of wine is given His blood, so that, having received the body of Christ, you may be made participators with Him of His body and blood." (Cyril Hieros., *Catech. Mystag.*, 4.) "You see Him," says St. John Chry-

sostom, "not now in the crib, but upon the altar." And again: "What is in the chalice is the same as that which flowed from His side, and we are made sharers of the same." St. Augustine in the ninth book of his *Confessions* speaks pathetically of the great devotion his mother, St. Monica, had for the Holy Mass, as does also St. Ambrose of his sister, St. Martella. The tradition of all the centuries, the unanimous consent of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and of the Catholic faithful of all places and at all times since the establishment of the religion of Jesus Christ, the uninterrupted continuation of belief in this dogma from the times of the apostles to our own, the testimony of all holy persons and martyrs; the miracles worked on different occasions, and which no one can deny; all this forms a proof so strong and so convincing that it is impossible to resist it.

2. And have unbelievers been able to allege any reasons—I do not say solid ones—to combat the reality of our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament? In fact, what could they bring forward to destroy this article of our faith? Will they say that this miracle is impossible and that God cannot change the substances of bread and wine into those of His body and blood?

They dare not advance a proposition so absurd. They tell us they believe that God could become in-

carnate; could unite Himself to our humanity; could become a helpless infant; suffer poverty and want; expose Himself to the contempt of men; become "the reproach of men and an outcast among the people"; and, finally, die in agony on the cross; that the Divinity could descend into the grave and become the partner of the body even when the soul of Christ was departed from it. And cannot the same Divinity and humanity be present under the appearance of a substance which in a sense is more honorable than a dead body laid in the grave? What, He who has created heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible, could He not change one substance into another? Does not this change of substance take place every day, even naturally, in men and all living things? A man eats and drinks bread and wine, his daily food; and by the process of digestion that bread and wine are changed into the substances of his flesh and blood. A cow eats grass, and in time the green herb is changed into beef, and milk, and horns and nerves. Seed is cast into the ground, and in time the generative virtue of that seed makes instinct with life the red earth which is changed into the blade, the slender stem, and, finally, into the waving field of golden grain.

Will they say that this mystery is not established clearly enough in the Holy Scriptures? It is impossible that they should seriously think so. And

if they do say it, one can advance boldly that they speak against their true sentiments. I presuppose that they read the Holy Bible in good faith and without prejudice.

Will they dare say that the Church has not explained herself clearly? They know not what they say. What then prevents them from submitting to a truth so evident, and which they cannot be ignorant of? What is it that blinds them to so great a light? It is prejudice of education in some. It is downright perversity in others—a perversity which Luther tried but could not make it triumph over his better judgment. It is temporal interest or human entanglements in others. It is pride, ambition, the spirit of cabal, in others still. They cannot deny it; and of this the persistent efforts of non-Catholics for four hundred years to explain away the obvious sense of Scripture are proof—efforts which have resulted in giving the monstrous total of nearly two hundred shades of meaning to the simple sentence, "This is My body."

3. Let us deplore the misfortune of our erring brethren, and beg of God that He may be pleased to have compassion on those unhappy ones by taking away the veil which conceals from them the truth, that they may have the happiness of entering into the bosom of the Church, and that they may adore

with us the great mystery, the masterpiece of divine love.

We give Thee thanks, O God, for having brought us up in the Catholic Church and for procuring us a pious education. If we had been born in the darkness of Protestantism, where would we be now? We would without doubt be, as so many others, "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death." But at the same time let us fear to abuse the benefits of God, and above all the inestimable gift of faith. In former times the countries which heresy has infected were filled with fervent Catholics. If we despise the Kingdom of God, that is to say, our religion, He will take it from us, following the threat which the Saviour of the world has made, and it will be given to a nation that will make good use of it.

Amiable Jesus, preserve us from such a calamity. We detest the unbelief of the enemies of our faith. We believe firmly that You are in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar as really present as you are today in Heaven, and as you were once the blessed Victim of our sins on Calvary. We are ready to shed the last drop of our blood in defense of this truth. "We believe, O Lord, help our unbelief."

THANKFULNESS TO GOD

A THANKSGIVING DAY SERMON

I

1. Amid the sorrows of the times in which we live, when we have the grief of seeing great multitudes fall away from the faith and practice of the religion of their ancestors, two grand historic facts stand out before us—facts among the most noteworthy in contemporary history; and these are, that a people, today amongst the greatest in the world, and with every prospect of a future greater than was ever given to any people by God before, in the most public and efficient manner, on the very coin of the realm, proclaim their faith and trust in God; and that this people yearly, through the solemn proclamation of their chief executive, set apart a universal holiday to render solemn thanksgiving to the same God for the benefits of the past year.

These, I say, are two facts of striking magnitude that we should be proud of—facts that are an honor to this twentieth century with all its shortcomings, moral and religious. They are facts that I have no

doubt will induce the Giver of all good gifts to cast His eyes propitiously on this great country, and confer on it an abundance of blessings, spiritual and temporal.

2. And now, with regard to this feeling of thankfulness to God for the benefits conferred on us during the past year, let me say that it is one that is prompted by the most generous instincts of our nature, and one moreover most proper to the season.

For what more becoming than that we, who were the recipients of so many favors from God during the past year, should now at its close feel our indebtedness to Him?

And the expression of that indebtedness for favors received is due to Him, not as a matter of justice the denial of which would be a sin; but as a matter that pertains to justice; since gratitude is one of the complementary virtues that belong to that great cardinal virtue.

Justice urges us to render to every one that which belongs to him. Gratitude pays homage to the giver, and makes a return to him of thankfulness for favors received.

And what act more pleasing in man than that which pays homage to the goodness of a benefactor? Whilst ingratitude, like the biting north-wind, freezes the heart and paralyzes the hand of the giver; gratitude, on the contrary, unbosoms the

generous nature and incites to a continuance of its gifts; even as the bounteous earth, fanned by the warm breath of summer, gives forth of its munificence to minister to the wants and enjoyments of all.

3. This thankfulness to God is a sentiment awakened in our hearts by holy religion, and is the outcome of a sincere piety, and of a deep faith which tells us that all our goods came from the same bounteous Giver. What does not holy faith tell us of the goodness and bounty of God? He is essential goodness. Unbounded generosity is His chief characteristic. "His mercy is spread over all His works." From Him, as from the centre of all perfection, all that goodness and perfection that we recognize in creatures flow. "The whole earth is full of the mercy of the Lord." And do we not all share in the effects of His liberality? See the many and special benefits conferred on us by Him.

I will not now recall to your memory all the benefits we enjoy in common with the rest of creatures. I will not recall the natural goods of existence, health, and material comforts. I will not point out to you the earth teeming with good things to minister to our wants and enjoyments. I will not remind you of the heavenly bodies that God has made to rejoice us with the warmth and brilliance of their rays. I will not remind you that even the

minutest star that twinkles in the remotest part of the heavens gives forth its light for the benefit of us, God's favorite creatures. I will not ask you to pay special thanks to Him for all these. But I will recall to your mind the supernatural destiny for which God at our creation designed us. I will recall the benefit of Redemption purchased at the cost of the blood and life of Jesus Christ. I will recall the benefit of the Sacraments and all the other helps that God has given us for our spiritual well-being here, and for the attainment of eternal life hereafter. I will recall the benefit of forgiveness of sins at a time when we show ourselves most unworthy of God's mercy. I will recall the continuous stream of grace poured on us especially during the past year. For all these, I say, we should give thanks to God at all times, but especially at the close of a year signalized by many and great favors done on our behalf. This gratitude, honor and fidelity would demand, were it only toward a human benefactor. Much more, toward our God to whom we are obliged to pay homage on so many other titles.

Nay, God Himself could not forego demanding the homage of thanksgiving for His many benefits to us. The very perfection of His Being demands that all His gifts return to Him by a homage of thanksgiving and glory.

For, being most perfect, His perfection demands

that in all His works He aim at the attainment of the noblest end; and the noblest end of His operations is, and can be, none other than His own glory. As the boundless ocean, whilst it gives by its waters fertility to all lands, levies tribute of the dry earth by the ministry of its streams and rivers; so, the Giver of all good gifts, while conferring being and happiness together with all other natural and supernatural gifts on the human race, will have the homage of thanksgiving and glory to Himself alone.

II

HOMAGE PAID TO GOD BY THE CHURCH

1. How the saints and the whole Church acknowledged the goodness of God in Himself and in the effects that spring from Him, all religion and all past history bear witness. See those lovely psalms inspired by God and sung as the perennial chant of the church militant for thirty hundred years. Are they not one string of praise and thanksgiving to God for His benefits to the human race through all the centuries of its history? "Praise ye the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever."

And this ceremony that we are privileged to take part in today is one that has descended from the

early ages of the Church. It is one that has been inspired by the deep faith and gratitude of Christians of past times, and that has been joined in by all ranks and classes of the Church's children.

I remember to have passed more than once the Christmas season in the centre of Christendom, and I shall not for long forget the scenes I witnessed yearly at the thanksgiving service there. There are five or six great festivals during the year that stir to its depths the great heart of the Roman people; and among them is this of thanksgiving for the benefits of the old year. I shall not soon forget the crowds that thronged the great church of the Gesù and its environs to assist at the *Te Deum* of thanksgiving on the occasion, nor their devotion, as that vast multitude joined in the solemn hymn of thanksgiving to God; while the great organ pealed forth its deep-toned song of praise to our blessed Lord, exposed for veneration on the altar.

2. And we, my brethren, are assembled here today to take part in a similar ceremony of thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the past year; and we also shall have the privilege of kneeling in adoration before the same Sacramental God who will be exposed on our altars throughout the day.

What then shall be the subject of our thanksgiving during those half hours that we hope to spend before the holy altar?

That God has vouchsafed to us in common with all men, existence, health, and all other natural blessings. That He has watched over us, our friends, our families, our flocks and herds, our business, our employment, our city and whole people, and has preserved us from the many calamities that might afflict us. That He has borne with us in spite of our many failings. That He has conferred on us in common with all the faithful the grace of calling us to the true Church and has endowed us with the many spiritual gifts and privileges we enjoy in this divine institution. That He has conferred on us the special and very prized blessing of the free exercise of our holy religion in this great country where religion is held in honor, and where we are allowed to practise our devotions in peace.

Thus showing ourselves grateful for past benefits, let us give to God the glory that is His due, sanctify ourselves by the practice of this beautiful virtue, and merit a continuance of favors spiritual and temporal from the bounty of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

THE EVIL OF POSTPONING REPENTANCE

The following words taken from the epistle of the mass of today[1] are quoted from the second chapter of the prophet Joel:

"Now, therefore, saith the Lord: 'Be converted to Me with all your heart in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord, your God.'" (Joel II, 12–13.)

I

1. In those stirring words the prophet called upon the whole people of God to arise and do penance for their sins. And in the same moving accents the Church today invites her children in every land to lay aside their accustomed pleasures and amusements and enter with heart and soul on the holy exercises and practices of the Lenten season.

"Be converted to the Lord with all your heart," she says to us, "in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning"; "in fasting" and in the performance of other exterior works of penance; "in weeping" over our sins, which have so offended our God; and "in mourning" over the evils they have brought on us

[1] Ash Wednesday.

in the loss of God's grace and friendship, and in the threat of eternal punishment.

2. Those raking words of the prophet are appropriate and just. For, what is it that we ordinarily see on this, the first and opening day of Lent?

Do we not see crowds present themselves to receive on their foreheads the holy ashes, who are scarcely ever seen again to take part in the devotions of the Church; who do not go to Mass on Sundays even, or receive the Sacraments? Like logs felled by the axe of the woodsman, which put forth a few scraggy shoots at the return of spring, though they are dead and destined for the fire, those degenerate souls, though they lie prone in sin and habits of vice, feel, nevertheless, within them the stirring of the Lenten graces, but as to any act of Christian life which requires vital effort, they are insensible and dead.

To such souls and others of their class I appeal today, and I warn them against the evil of delaying to be converted to God by a sincere repentance for their past sins. To this effect let me first of all dispel the chief fallacy by which the devil deceives sinners and retains them in their habit of sin, namely, a presumptuous confidence in God's mercy.

"God is merciful," they say to themselves, "and He will not take me short in the latter end. I will have my fling, therefore, while the opportunity is

given me. Later on, perhaps on my death-bed, I will be converted and will begin to serve Him."

"God is merciful," you tell me, my dear brother or sister. "God is above all things merciful," I repeat. "The mercies of the Lord are spread over all His works." God is merciful, but have you reflected on what Scripture says, that "His mercy is towards them that fear Him"?

God is merciful, and His mercy has been extended, we know, on some rare occasions even to sinners on their death-bed. And in this way, praised be His holy Name, as well as in others He would show us that the state of hardened sinners differs from that of the damned; that, whereas, the latter are fixed in perpetual enmity towards Him, the former, while life remains, are in a state in which it is still possible to obtain repentance and forgiveness.

God is merciful, but has it ever occurred to you that this very mercy may urge Him to destroy you? For is His mercy to be exercised in favor of men in general, or only in favor of you in particular? If in favor of men in general, may it not urge Him to make an example of you by cutting you off in your sins in order that others may be deterred from evil ways by the example of your impenitence?

2. "But do we not see," you will tell me, "that

those who lead indifferent lives are generally converted in the end, and when they are struck down by their last illness, do they not make their peace with God and die happily?"

Be not too confident, I pray you, in the efficacy of that repentance. I was of your way of thinking for a long time. I had great hopes—I had a consoling confidence in those apparently extraordinary manifestations of the divine mercy towards inveterate sinners. And when I heard of a poor sinner's having received the last Sacraments with signs of repentance, there welled up from my heart a fervent "thanks be to God" for that at last the poor soul was safe.

Alas! I have to acknowledge that a long experience with those in dangerous illness has given a rude shock to my credulity, and has led me to apprehend that what often appear to be true sentiments of sorrow and repentance, are only the outcome of a servile fear of God's chastisements, and when once the terror of approaching death has been removed by symptoms of returning health, all the old dispositions of the inveterate sinner revive.

Have I not seen those who received the last Sacraments apparently with the best dispositions, afterwards acknowledge that even then they concealed their sins in Confession and received the Sac-

raments sacrilegiously? Have I not attended those who in dangerous, and what were thought fatal illnesses, showed all the ordinary, aye, and some of the extraordinary signs of repentance, and who, once the immediate danger of death was passed, seemed as bent on their old ways of sin as they were before? Would you guarantee that the repentance of those was sincere—was a repentance acceptable to God?

No, brethren, a death-bed repentance is a last resource on the part of the inveterate sinner. A death-bed absolution is often a last resource on the part of the priest who is called on to attend such; and, as all medical men will tell you, last resources are of doubtful efficacy.

3. What repentance could appear more sincere than that of the tyrant Antiochus, of whom we read in Sacred Scripture? This example alone ought to make the most hardened tremble. From the moment that he is attacked with his fatal malady he turns to God and prays. He confesses openly his crimes. He acknowledges that he has done wrong in making war against the Almighty; that it is very just that mortal man should subject himself to God, and that he well deserved to suffer for his past sins. He promises not only to restore what he had unjustly taken, but, moreover, to give great alms; to adorn the temple of Jerusalem; to contribute abundantly

from his revenues for the service of God. He protests that if he should recover from his malady, he would embrace the religion of the Jews, and that he would go through the whole world publishing the goodness and mercy of God. What more could he do? And yet, who could have believed it? His repentance was not sufficient to obtain the pardon he so eagerly sought. Holy Scripture assures us that this sinner died in his sins. And why, if not because his repentance was not sincere, and because it was too long delayed?

4. Let not then the devil deceive you, either by representing to you in a fallacious manner God's mercy, or by the seeming conversion of others on their death-bed. Eternal salvation is too vital a question for us all to be left to the uncertainties of a death-bed repentance.

Take heed rather to the words of Scripture warning you to "defer not to be converted to the Lord, and put it not off from day to day; for God's wrath shall rise on a sudden and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee."

II

1. Let me go on to tell you that the hope of those who live on in sin with the expectation of dying happily in the end, *contradicts sound reason. It*

contradicts the teaching and example of Scripture; it contradicts all experience, as well as the teaching of the doctors and fathers of the Church.

It contradicts reason, I say. Is it reasonable to expect that God, who has been outraged by the sinner all his life and who now in the hour of His mercy offers him reconciliation and pardon; is it reasonable that He should be ready at the time and in the circumstances dictated by the offender, to come to terms with him and grant him His triumphant grace, when now that sinner ceases to offend Him only because he is unable to offend Him any longer?

Is it reasonable that after forging strong chains of evil habits, and binding yourself with them all your life when health and vigor of mind and will were yours, you should expect to be able to break them all at once on your death-bed, when you will be a poor, miserable, broken man, racked with torture of body and mind, and torn by a thousand cares that will bear down on you with the impetuosity of a tumultuous rabble? "Alas! the folly of sinners," cries out St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi in her last illness, "to leave their conversion to their death-bed, when I am scarcely able to pronounce the name of Jesus."

Is it reasonable to expect that after leaning to the side of sin and self-indulgence all your life,

you will at length come to die on the side of grace and salvation? What does Scripture say? "On whatever side the tree leans, there shall it fall." Brethren, you are that tree. If you lean during life on the side of good works and virtues, you shall fall, you shall die, on the side of mercy and salvation. But if, on the contrary, your tendency all through life be on the side of vice and evil, on the side of evil and impenitence you shall surely fall.

2. But what says Holy Scripture, that authentic record of God's dealings with men? What say the inspired Books with regard to the end of habitual sinners? What grounds do they give for hope of a death-bed repentance?

O brethren, here it is that all I have said up to this receives the most terrible confirmation. And, first of all, let us hear the warnings of God to us through the medium of the inspired pages. "Defer not," He says, "to be converted to the Lord and put it not off from day to day; for His wrath shall rise on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee." "I will come," He says, "as a thief in the night." "Be ye always ready; for, at the hour you think not, the Son of Man will come" to summon your soul to judgment.

"Be ye always ready." From warnings He goes on to threats, and tells the sinner plainly that, like an unfruitful tree, he will be cut down and cast into

the fire of divine vengeance. He threatens unfaithful Catholics that, like the tares that grow up among the wheat, they will be bound up in bundles and cast into the fire of hell. After that He tells of the miserable end that awaits sinners hereafter. "The death of sinners," of those who continue in their sins to the end, "is most wretched." "They shall go down of a sudden to destruction." "They shall be cast forth as the dust which the wind drives from the face of the earth." "God shall wash His hands in the blood of sinners." "The land shall be soaked with their blood, and the ground shall be sodden with the fat of the wicked." "They shall be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and their fire shall not be extinguished."

The Psalmist compares death-bed penitents to hungry dogs which, after lounging about all day, return to their master's house at evening in search of food. "They shall return at evening, and suffer hunger like dogs, and shall go round about the city." Yes, after having during life tried to fill themselves with the garbage of every by-way and alley of sin, they will return at the evening of life to seek the bread of forgiveness from the Lord, and to get entrance to the city of mercy. But forgiveness shall not be given them; for, mark what follows: "But Thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; Thou shalt

scatter them in Thy power and strike them down in their pride." How well these passages accord with others addressed to the sinner in the days of his obstinacy: "You shall call upon Me, and I will not hear. You have despised My counsel and have neglected My reprehensions. I will also laugh at your destruction and will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared."

O sinners, where is the ground of your hope, and what confidence does God give you of escape from the "wrath to come"? Let me ring once again in yours ears the words of Truth itself: "You shall seek the Lord, and you shall die in your sins." If you now "despise His counsel and neglect His reprehensions," He, on that day, "will laugh at your destruction, and will mock you when that shall come upon you which you feared."

3. If from the words of Scripture we turn to the examples there given us, the fate that awaits daring evil-doers comes out in stronger relief than ever. Is it not astonishing that of all the impious whose deaths are recorded in the Bible, and who are very numerous, there is mention of only one who was converted in the last moments of his life, and that was the good thief?

What is even more astonishing, and what comes more home to those who, because they are Catholics and because priests are at hand, deceive

themselves with the hope of repentance in the latter end, is that at the time when grace was poured out more abundantly than at any other, there died by the side of the Saviour one whose body we may say was bespattered with the Blood of the Redemption, an impenitent soul. Yes, the bad thief died in his sins by the riven side of the Saviour and was damned. His impenitent soul went down from the cross and was buried in hell.

After this will you, because you are a Catholic, forsooth, and because the Sacrament of Reconciliation is at hand, plume yourself with hope and presumptuously defer your conversion to later on? If, then, deceived by the devil, you have up to now refused to make your peace with God in the hope that the Sacraments will snatch you from hell in the latter end, let the dreadful fate of the bad thief, who was condemned to hell in the very hour that the Sacraments received all their efficacy, open your eyes to the ruin that threatens you. "Delay not, therefore, to be converted to the Lord, and put it not off from day to day; for His wrath shall rise on a sudden and in the time of vengeance He will destroy you."

4. The hope of unrepentant sinners contradicts all experience, as well as the teaching of the Doctors and Fathers of the Church. It contradicts the experience of all past ages. And now, as every age

is filled with examples of the terrible deaths of inveterate sinners, I shall confine myself to the relation of some that I myself have met with. . . .

O brethren, take warning in time from the sad end of others. "Be ye always ready." "Put not off your conversion from day to day," lest the vengeance of God overtake you in your sins, and you die the death of the reprobate. Are you a drunkard, an impure man or woman, a rogue, an envious person, a revengeful soul? Then, I say to you: lay aside your sinful ways and do penance, that you may escape the wrath to come. Leave not your soul to the uncertainties of a death-bed repentance.

What are the teachings of the Fathers of the Church with regard to such a repentance? "It is insufficient," says St. Augustine. "It is presumptuous," says St. Bernard. "It is ridiculous," "It is absurd," says St. John Chrysostom. "It is morally impossible," says St. Cyprian. "What sort of a penance must that be," argues St. Jerome, "which a man resorts to only because he has now no longer to live?"

But, not to weary you with quotations from the Fathers, let me conclude with a saying of the same uncompromising champion of true doctrine, this luminous Doctor of the Church, this incomparable

interpreter of Holy Scripture, himself, perhaps, the most wonderful example of a penitential life in all church history. This great saint being on his death-bed, his disciples came to beseech him to speak to them before leaving them, some words of edification. The dying saint, turning towards them with terror pictured on his countenance, spoke to them in these terms: "My dear children; do penance during your life, and wait not till the hour of death to be converted; for, *I am persuaded, and I have learned by a long experience, that of ten thousand persons whose life has always been bad, scarcely one can be found who has obtained pardon of his sins in the end.*" This is the testimony of this famous Father of the desert, of a dying saint, of a saint about to appear before his God.

5. O dearly beloved sinners, be wise in time. Delude not yourselves with deceitful confidence. "Put not off your conversion from day to day." Contemn the suggestions of the deceiver who would lead you blindfolded to your ruin. Open your eyes to the dangers of your position. You play upon the crisp of a volcano. You shall be swallowed up in its gurgling depths. Trust not to the seeming health of your body, which is friable as the potter's clay. Repent this day of your sins. Carry within you a conscience which tells you that you are in the

friendship of God, and the fear of death will not sadden you. All your days will be spent in the delight which God's grace imparts; and you will be happy in the friendship of God in time and in eternity.

DRUNKENNESS

"Have mercy on me, O Lord, for my enemies have trodden me under foot. They have afflicted me, fighting against me all the day long." (Ps. LV, 1.)

I

1. Thus prayed King David when he was held by the Philistines in Gath; and the words may be applied to our Lord at sight of the outrages He suffers daily at the hands of drunkards. For if there is any class of sinners who may be characterized in preference to all others as open persecutors of our Saviour, if He has daring enemies who trample under foot His sacred laws and contradict Him all day long; surely they can be none other than those impious men who, while still retaining the name of Christians, with pagan hearts and with the appetites and instincts of beasts, give themselves up to unrestrained gluttony, the vilest of the passions, and drown every upright sense, every religious feeling, in the maddening fumes of drunkenness.

Allow me to put before you today the dangers

of drunkenness and the sad results it brings about in those who are addicted to it. And when we come to examine those evil effects of drunkenness, we find that they are at once innumerable and disastrous.

That drunkenness is, first of all, a great moral evil, which corrupts the human heart and turns it away from the service of its Creator, is patent.

We have proofs of this without number from the teaching and examples of Scripture, as well as from our own daily experience.

The prophet Isaias, speaking of drunkards, says that "they have abandoned the Saviour and trampled under foot His commandments, to give themselves to drunkenness."

And indeed what commandment, human or divine, is there that the drunkard will not violate and trample under foot, when it interferes with the indulgence of his besetting passion?

Has the drunkard ordinarily any respect for the Commandments of God or of His Church? Does he show piety or respect for his parents or relatives? As a citizen, does he respect the laws of his country when they interfere with his indulgence of drink and those furious passions of which his drunkenness is the parent?

No; for another prophet (Osee) tells us that drunkenness overturns the whole order of nature

in man. "It changes the human heart into the heart of a beast." St. Paul uses even stronger language in regard to drunkards, and says that "they have no other god than their belly"; that "they are the enemies of the cross of Christ," and that "the end that awaits them is destruction." What expressions, dearly beloved, and into what an abyss of impiety must not he be plunged who would declare war against the Saviour of the world, that loving Redeemer who laid down His life for our salvation; who would rail against the cross, the instrument of Redemption, the sole hope of sinners; who would renounce the Creator, the Sovereign Good, to make for himself a god of a thing so vile as his belly!

Drunkards are "the enemies of the cross of Christ," that is, I take it, of Christian living; their hearts have become pagan; "their god is their belly"; "their end is destruction." How do not the examples of Scripture confirm those sayings of the Apostle! It suggests that it was this vice together with satiety in eating that threw Sodom and the four other cities into the excesses which drew upon them the avenging fire from heaven. "The land abounded with corn and wine," says Scripture, which, using to bad purpose, they committed excesses that have made their names synonymous with unutterable vice among all peoples. It was at the feast, amidst cups and flowing bowls, that Ab-

salom, the son of David, cruelly murdered his own brother. It was in helpless drunkenness that the unhappy Holophernes was bathed in his own blood by the mortal stroke that Judith gave him. It was in his drunkenness, when cups ran high and the midnight revel was prolonged, that Herod sacrificed St. John the Baptist to his infamous passion. Aye, and drunkenness is the fell cause of many and many a murder and many and many a crime, the sad tale of which purples the pages of our journals day by day.

2. But what is it that our own experience teaches us on this subject, and what infamy are not drunkards capable of? Do we not easily find men who are ready to perjure themselves, to betray a friend, to commit any crime you command them, for a few glasses of whiskey, or a few pots of beer? Is it not drunkenness that creates monsters? Is it not the ordinary cause of the enormous crimes that men are guilty of—impurities, robberies, quarrels, murders, irreligion, and impiety of every kind? See the excess to which it led the unhappy Baltassar, and be astonished at the chastisement his impiety calls forth at the avenging hand of God.

During a great banquet that he gave his courtiers, when wine had muddled his head, he caused to be brought into his unholy feast the sacred vessels his grandfather, Nabuchodonosor, had car-

ried away from the temple of Jerusalem; and he had the temerity to drink out of them himself, together with his guests and concubines. But at that same hour a mysterious hand was seen to write on the wall of the festive chamber the sentence of his condemnation. And that very night, amidst the surroundings and the companions of his debauch, he lost at one and the same time his kingdom, his life, and his soul; for all these chastisements were contained in that dread sentence written by the hand of God: "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting."

In the assemblies of the debauched, amidst bottles and glasses, when drink has risen to the head, how many immoral discourses, how many impious railings, how many licentious words against modesty, against charity, against religion? Things the most sacred and venerable are not spared.

3. Examine yourselves, my dear brethren, you who have had the misfortune of abandoning yourselves to the vice of which I speak, and see what drink and drunkenness have caused you to say and do. How many obscene songs? how many impure discourses? how many criminal thoughts and desires? how many shameful and abominable actions were you guilty of? How many bad reports have you circulated? How many quarrels, and oaths, and curses? How many libertine and impious conver-

sations against piety and religion; how many scandals have you given to your families; how often have you been a spectacle of disgust to those who were the witnesses of the extravagances and follies that drink caused you to commit?

Acknowledge, then, from your own experience, from the disorders drunkenness has caused you to be guilty of, as well as from the other proofs that I have given, that drunkenness is the curse of religion and morality, and that drunkards are black sheep infecting the fold of Christ; "evil trees, bearing evil fruit," whose end is to be cut down and cast into the fire of divine vengeance.

II

1. But drunkenness is not only a great moral evil, it is moreover one of the most crying of our social evils.

How many are the injuries that the drunkard inflicts on the community of which he is a member? There is surely nothing more disgusting, nothing more humiliating to us as men, than the sight of one who has reduced himself to the condition of drunkenness. I put it to you, is this not so? Why do we feel so impatient at the presence of a drunken man or woman? Is it not that we feel ourselves outraged by the spectacle of the degradation to

which our nature has been subjected? See that drunken man as he staggers along the street. What a horrible figure he cuts! What ridiculous grimaces! What intolerable manners! What detestable actions! He cries, he yells, he laughs, he weeps, almost at one and the same time. At one time he does not know his relatives and friends; at another, he hobnobs with strangers as if he knew them intimately. Now he is cowardly and timid; again he is bold and daring. He imagines he is rich, and that the whole world belongs to him. He pronounces judgment on everything in a decisive tone. Occasionally he falls out with the companions of his debauch, and they batter and belabor one another like cattle.

At last he tumbles to the ground, and wallows in the mire like a hog; nay, more shamefully than a hog; for that vile animal, if you hit it with your stick, can start up and scamper away; but the fallen drunkard can neither squeak nor move. He can but give a low murmuring growl, as much as to say: "Leave me alone; the mire is my congenial bed. I'm lower than man. I'm lower than beast. I'm a drunkard."

Yes, God of Heaven, there he lies, he that was formed in Your image, more degraded than the vilest brute! For I ask you, brethren, have you ever seen an animal eat or drink to such a degree as to

destroy the instinct that the Author of nature had given it?

And man reduces himself through gluttony to the privation of reason; to the extinction of his noblest faculty; so that he no longer knows who he is, or what he does, or what he says, or where he goes; and he is incapable of preserving himself from harm.

Say, then, my friends, does not the drunkard who reduces himself to this condition degrade himself below the vilest beast? Does he not render himself the reproach of nature, and the execration of the human race?

2. But his offensiveness, and the disgust he excites in us, are not the only injuries the drunkard inflicts on his fellow-men. Oh, no; manifold are the injuries society receives from him; and it were tedious, perhaps, to enumerate them all. Is it not from the drunkard that proceed injustice, and calumny, and quarrels, and murder, and scandal of little ones? Do not the lips of the drunkard pronounce curses, and blasphemies, and words of impurity—words injurious to the neighbor's character, words producing discord among friends, words begetting contempt for religion? Whence proceed dissensions and brawls among neighbors? Who divulges secrets? Who is it whose interest is all centered in self, and who sacrifices all to his

self-indulgence? Who squanders the talents given him for the advancement of his fellows?

Is not drunkenness the nursery of paupers, and vagabonds, and thieves, and all that is bad in society? Go into the gaols and poorhouses. See that crowd of tramps and gaol birds who infest town and country. Inquire what it was that reduced them to this state. Ask them, and if they tell the truth, they will confess, in nine cases out of ten, that it was drink that placed them in that wretched situation. And we can be assured that there are very few who have fallen into that state of want or crime except through the extravagance caused through drink, or the crimes that follow it as a shadow.

3. Ah, my brethren, the drunkard is an enemy of the human race, whose presence is the bane of society, whose intercourse works the corruption of good morals among the young and simple-minded. Show me one who has frequented the company of the drunkard, and who has not suffered moral injury thereby. Is he a young man? He himself will become in time a drunkard, and a plague of society. Is she a young woman? Ah, she has already endangered her virtue; and if she perseveres in his society, she will in a short time be nothing better than a strumpet.

Are they his wife or family? They are daily pro-

voked to sin by the ill-treatment they receive, and by the evil communication of his morals. Is not then, I repeat, the drunkard an enemy of the human race; a black sheep, infecting by the contagion of his example the fold of Christ; a conspirator against the good order of society?

III

1. In the third place drunkenness is the curse of family life, and ruins a man's prospects in this world and in the world to come.

It is the curse of family life, I say. How many fortunes are overturned by this infamous passion? A father at his death leaves his children in good circumstances. There is plenty in the house, stock in the fields, solvency in his affairs. In a short time all those have disappeared. What has become of them? Drunken bouts, debauchery, neglect, and good cheer have snatched all away. How many tradesmen who have high wages, yet are always in want? If a turn of illness comes upon them, if they are out of work for a few days, behold them reduced to the last extremity. And how is this? It is because every cent they earn goes for drink. They spend in a few hours the earnings of many days. Yes, the man or woman given to drink is destitute of the most ordinary dictates of

prudence. The means necessary for the decent maintenance of his family seem as dirt to the mind of the intemperate fool. Wealth, time, talents—all are squandered, all are frittered away and gambled, in the society of worthless companions. Business, wife, family, health, all are unthought of by the drunkard in his cups. He cares for nothing in the jubilation of that hour of false pleasure.

2. Look at the drunkard among the companions of his debauch. He is joyous, it seems; he is generous; he is brave. Words of boasting and self-praise escape in volumes from his lips. He is the hero of the hour, whose gallant deeds, whose good qualities, all must admire. Follow him. Track his staggering steps to the home of his unhappy wife and little ones; and what a change? Ah, there you come upon the tiger in his lair—the brutal despot of all those near and dear to him.

Hear the salutation he pronounces as he crosses the threshold of that desolate, neglected home. Hear the curses his lisping tongue endeavors to pronounce. Hear the greeting that he gives the unhappy woman who has had the misfortune to become his wife. See how he incriminates her character and foully charges her friends with crimes they never thought of. Hear him as he pours abuse upon injury, and treats the companion of his life as if she were his slave. See the disturbance he causes

the family, among whom peace and order reigned till the unhappy hour of his return.

Look upon that poor wife, distress and grief pictured upon her brow. There was a time not many years ago, when she was a beaming, handsome girl, with maiden modesty and innocence the ornament of her youth. She is now a broken-hearted, prematurely aged woman, with the spirit crushed within her from hardship and sorrow and bad usage. Her eyes often stream with tears as she recalls the happy days of her maidenhood—days, alas, too quickly vanished—gone forever! her high hopes blasted—her strong heart broken—her tenderest feelings wounded by brutal words more cutting than the lash of the executioner. Her whole ardent longing is for the time when an early grave may snatch her from her intolerable woes.

3. Look around the wretched home of the drunkard. See his children barefooted; their clothes in tatters on their backs; no fire on the hearth to warm them, even in the most inclement weather; no comfortable meal to cheer them. And while the most savage beasts exercise a careful providence over their little ones, and deprive themselves of part of their nourishment, that they may give to them; those inhuman and unnatural fathers fill their stomachs with drink, sing and carouse, while their unfortunate wives and children are abandoned to

the most pressing necessity, and are allowed to pine away in misery and want.

On Sunday morning, when the church bell summons all good Catholics to the house of God, the drunkard wallows at home on his filthy bed after Saturday night's debauch, the low fellow, in whom all the worst passions of the brute predominate. He has no thought for God or holy Mass; and he dreams only of purging off the surfeit of last evening's debauch in brutal slumber.

IV

1. Lastly, drunkenness ruins bodily health, causes diseases without number, and conducts its victim by rapid stages to the tomb. Is not this what the Holy Spirit teaches us by the mouth of the Wise Man? "Look not upon the wine," he says, "when it is yellow; when the color thereof shineth in the glass. It goeth in pleasantly; but in the end it will bite like a snake; and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk."

What is more true than this? How many cruel maladies; how many long and incurable infirmities are brought on by tippling and drunkenness? How many young men, aye, and women, are carried away by a premature death, by reason of their debaucheries? Hence, the common saying that drunk-

enness kills more than famine or the sword. And it is to this St. Ambrose refers when, speaking of the pernicious custom of treating, prevalent then as now, he says: "You invite your friends to drink under pretext of diverting yourselves; and you try to bring them to death. You invite them to a feast; and you shove them into a grave. You promise them nourishment; and you prepare for them punishments. You offer them drink; and you give them poison."

As to the many personal evils that follow indulgence in drink, Scripture says of them elsewhere: "Who hath wo? Whose father hath wo? Who hath contentions? Who falleth into pits? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups." And again: "Wo to you who rise early in the morning, to drink till the evening, to be inflamed with liquor. You look with pleasure on the wine when it glistens in the glass." "Wo to you who are strong to drink wine, and are stout men at drunkenness." "You amuse yourselves; you sing and play. Therefore, hell" (that is to say, the grave) "hath enlarged her mouth to swallow you."

2. But not to this world alone is the evil of drunkenness confined. Witness the case of that rich glutton of whom Scripture says: "He fed sumptu-

ously every day"; that is to say, he ate of the most exquisite meats and drank of the choicest wines. He is now these nineteen hundred years crying out in hell "for a drop of water to cool his burning tongue."

I spare you, brethren, the description of the drunkard's last hours, where scenes too horrible to be described are, alas, too often witnessed on that saddest of all occurrences, by those whose duty it is to be present. I spare you the representation of the drunkard's appearance before the tribunal of the Eternal Judge, where alone the guilt of this criminal habit can be appreciated to the full. The talents wasted, the graces squandered, the time misspent, the crimes committed, the miseries inflicted on wife and family, the scandals given and spread broadcast among society: O just and awful Judge of the living and the dead, what punishments await the drunkard in the world to come?

Dearly beloved brethren, I have endeavored to put before you the evils that are the consequences of this vice of drunkenness. It is not to give you information which you did not already possess; for you yourselves have witnessed them, alas, too often; but to exhort you to withdraw yourselves far from the occasions of this vice, which, as you see, is one of the most destructive of the age we live in.

As then you value the happiness of domestic life,

which after all is the greatest natural good we can enjoy; as you feel your responsibility to society; as you honor the religion which you profess; as you venerate Almighty God, whose blessed vision you one day hope to enjoy; I charge you to banish this demon of drink from among you; to remove yourselves from the occasions of it; to lead temperate, honorable, Christian lives; so that when the angel of death comes, he may find you, as the Apostle says, "not in riotousness; not in drunkenness; but having put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

SCANDAL

"Wo to the world because of scandals: for it must needs be that scandals come: but, nevertheless, wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh." (Matt. XXIII, 7.)

I

1. There is no subject more disagreeable to a priest to preach on than that of scandal—and this for two reasons: first, because of the hard things such a subject calls on him to say; and second, because of the little effect he foresees his words will have upon those to whom they are particularly applicable.

Yes, "it must needs be," as says our Lord, "that scandals come." It must needs be, human society being constituted as it is of the good and the wicked, where the wicked far outbalance the good in numbers and audacity; it must needs be that scandals come; but yet, "Wo to that man by whom scandal cometh."

What, then, is scandal, which our Blessed Lord says must be always in the world, and which will bring such signal chastisement on those who are

guilty of it? Well, scandal, in the sense I speak of, does not mean uncharitable gossip; neither does it mean what is commonly understood amongst certain classes as abusive language, language in which old sores are ripped open and evil things are told of one's relatives. Scandal, as I would have you to understand, is defined by theologians to be "a word, or an act, which gives occasion to the spiritual ruin of the neighbor." It is a word spoken against religion or morality, which poisons the minds and hearts of the hearers. For, "as the body is poisoned through the mouth," by means of what we eat or drink, "so the soul," says the greatest of philosophers, "is poisoned through the ears." It is an evil action which, being performed publicly, gives example to others in wrong-doing. It may also be an omission of duty, an omission which is calculated to bring about laxity amongst Christians.

And, at the outset, I would have you observe that in order to constitute scandal it is not necessary that the word, the act, or the omission, be sinful in itself, or that it be intended to draw others to the commission of sin. It is sufficient that it have the appearance of evil, and that from its circumstances it is calculated to work this evil effect on those who are witnesses of it. For, you must remember, dearly beloved, that we are essentially creatures of imitation, and that we are drawn most powerfully to the

copying of the acts, the words and the whole conduct and lives of those amongst whom it is our lot in life to be thrown.

Such is scandal; and I say, first of all, that scandal works a supreme injury upon God, inasmuch as it withdraws His creatures from the allegiance they owe to Him and to His laws. You all know the end God created us for, my brethren. His own glory was that end—that He might show forth in us His power, and wisdom, and goodness, and receive from us a perpetual homage of thanksgiving and praise. Our essential duty, then, must be to render to God every instant of our lives a supreme worship of our hearts and wills.

Now, what does the scandal-giver, when by his criminal word, or act, or omission, he offers the occasion of spiritual ruin to his neighbor? He takes that fellow-being, bound like himself by every title to render an incessant homage to his Creator, and withdraws him from His service, casts him into a state of sin, and engages him in enmity and rebellion against Him. Ah, brethren, if it be a shameful thing in a child to be indifferent to the respect due to a father; to see him without protest outraged in his honor and good name; if it be so great a crime to withdraw a man from the allegiance he owes his country; if the name of traitor is so hateful to all men; if the crime of Absalom,

who raised the standard of revolt against his prince and father, was so great and merited so signal a punishment; how hideous must that crime be which withdraws a man from the service of his Heavenly Father and Sovereign Lord, and engages him in open revolt against Him? And this is the crime the man commits who by his criminal word or act gives scandal to his neighbor. This is the crime you commit, my dear brother or sister, when, by cursing or swearing, you lead others to curse and swear likewise. This is the crime you are guilty of when by quarreling or injustice you bring others into like sins. This is your crime, you who speak immodest words before the young and innocent, words which received into their impressionable minds convey the poison of death to them, and become for them a leaven of corruption to their whole after lives. This is your crime, you, drunken fathers and mothers, who by your excesses give bad example to your children. This is your crime, you young men; aye, and you old men, too, who, by your unlawful interference with girls and women, would sully the purity of their souls. This is your crime all you who, by word, or act, or omission, are the cause of disedification to your neighbor. You deprive Almighty God of the worship which is His due; and you cause His subjects to turn traitors to Him, and enlist themselves in the ranks of His declared enemies.

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2. But the scandal-giver does greater injury to his God. He overturns the merciful designs of Jesus Christ in regard to man, and brings to naught the work of the Redemption.

You know, dearly beloved, what was the cause of our Lord's coming down and taking flesh amongst us. "It was to save man," as it is sung in the Mass: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven and was made Man."

This grand design of our salvation occupied the Son of God from all eternity. It was to carry it out that in time He took flesh, was born in a stable, lived a life of poverty and hardship, suffered hunger, and thirst, and affronts, and reproaches, and, finally, died on the cross. If He arose again, "it was for our justification," says the Apostle. If He ascended into Heaven, it was "to prepare a place for us." If He instituted the Sacraments, it was to apply to our souls the graces purchased for us by His death. If He established the college of the Apostles, it was to spread throughout the earth His saving religion. If He constituted the order of the priesthood, it was to perpetuate His own benign mission among men, and to confer on generations to the remotest ages the blessings won for them by His Passion and death. In a word, Christ, God and Man in His entirety, has been given us to withdraw us

from sin and to confer on us the privilege of the children of God.

3. But what is the work of the scandal-giver? He renders useless to the souls whom he perverts the Blood which Jesus Christ has shed for them. He destroys the merits of His blessed death. He snatches from the Saviour the souls that have cost Him so much, in order to fling them back again to the infernal enemy.

It is in vain, then, O charitable Shepherd of souls, that you have taken so much trouble in seeking the lost sheep. In vain have You fatigued yourself in running after her. In vain have You died in order to give her life. Your labors, Your tears, Your suffering, Your death, are all in vain. You have snatched her from the infernal wolf, only in order that the scandal-giver might take her again and hand her over to his murderous keeping. O what a crime! It is yours, scandal-giver, a crime more cruel than that of the homicidal Jews. For, if they murdered the Lord of Glory, His death had this stupendous effect, at least, that it purchased for us Redemption; whereas, the deicide which you commit by crucifying Him again in the person of His children, only renders useless in their regard the merits of His Passion. A crime more murderous than that of the greatest persecutors of the

Christian name. For, if they made war on the professors of the Christian religion; if they persecuted them; their efforts only effected the salvation of innumerable martyrs, and spread the faith to the ends of the earth; whereas, the war carried on against souls by scandal-givers is so much the more dangerous to their salvation as it is the more insidious in its nature, and the more deadly in its effects.

4. What, then, shall we say of those persecutors who have made those days of peace to religion more bitter than the fiercest war? With St. John the Evangelist, we will call them antichrists. For, in truth, they forestall the reign of antichrist on earth and show themselves as hostile to our Lord as even he. What will be the design and occupation of antichrist in the latter times, as foretold by St. John? It will be to destroy the Christian religion, and to seduce the souls for whom our Lord died. And this is your occupation, O scandal-giver. You seduce souls by your evil words and example, and prepare the world for the reception of that great tyrant who is to make the last ages hideous by his presence.

I make a stronger denunciation against you, and I say, in the words of our Lord to the scandal-givers of His day: "You are the children of your

father the devil, and you do his works." Now, what has been the employment of the devil from the beginning of the world until now? "He was a murderer," continues our Lord, "he was a murderer from the beginning." Yes, the daring enemy of God and man he has plied his evil work from the beginning. Filled with spite at seeing men created to fill the places lost by him and his rebel companions, he ceases not to tempt them to sin in order to draw them down to share his eternal ruin. The presumptuous rival of the Man-God, he tries to defeat His merciful designs in man's favor. And, unhappily, he has succeeded only too well in seducing souls. But sometimes of himself he cannot compass his designs from the resistance he meets with. What, then, does he do? Ah, my brethren, he employs scandal-givers, men and women, who, not content with committing sin themselves, try to draw others to be their accomplices in guilt. See, then, what are scandal-givers. They are the confederates of the devil who second his evil designs. They are the instruments serving him in his murderous work of conquering souls already staggered by his temptations. Say, then, is not scandal a hideous crime, since it takes from God the honor which is due to Him and overturns the merciful designs of Jesus Christ in our regard?

II

1. Let us now go on to consider the sin as it affects the scandal-giver himself. And, as we shall see, it works on him untold evils.

If I were to make a distinction between this sin and others, I would say, it differs from them, just as, in the physical order, an epidemic or a plague differs from other classes of disease. Let a man suffer from the most acute disorder; let him be harassed with the most grievous sores; his disease affects himself alone; and, though he may give trouble to those about him, yet, he alone is the afflicted one. But, is he struck with the plague? is his malady contagious? then, it becomes a matter of public concern to have him removed from the society of others. His clothes, his house, his very breath, become so many vehicles for the propagation of the disease, which, unless arrested, may spread even to the destruction of the whole community.

And so with the malady of which I speak; it is a moral pest, so much the more to be feared, as it finds us already only too well disposed to contract it. How often does it happen that one immoral member ruins the spiritual life of the whole community? It needed only a Luther or a Henry VIII to

draw away some of the fairest provinces of Christendom from union with the Church. It needed only a Jeroboam to draw away ten out of the twelve tribes of Israel into idolatry. It needed only a Lucifer to draw away a third part of the angels and to transform them into devils. And, believe me, it needs only a few drunkards, a few immodest or irreligious men or women in a place like this, to draw away a great part of the youth to a life like their own.

2. And into what state will the scandal-giver lead those who hearken to his lessons? O brethren, into the most frightful that the imagination can picture—into a state of spiritual death and rebellion against God—into a state which will expose them to the eternal death of hell.

O scandal-giver! O dearly beloved brother or sister,—for, you are still a brother or sister in Christ,—I appeal to you. Look into your conduct. See the evil you do. Have you an enemy? I would say to you, persecute him, if you will; calumniate him; burn his house; harass his wife and children; take your knife and plunge it into his breast; blow out his brains. But, I appeal to you by the mercy of Jesus Christ; spare his soul. It is his only one, his real self, and it has before it an eternal destiny.

But, is it an enemy that the scandal-giver consigns thus to spiritual death? Not at all. It is a dear

and fast friend. It is a bosom companion who has made him the depositary of all his secrets. It is an affectionate lover whom he seduces to content his passion. It is a beloved child whom God entrusted to him to rear up in His holy fear. And thus does the scandal-giver treat his nearest and dearest friends!

3. What renders this sin the more odious is that the consequences of it are irreparable. What will the scandal-giver do to repair his sin when the evil leaven he prepared has already corrupted the whole mass? What will he do when the sins he taught others become habitual with them, and when they in turn lead others into the same sins? What will he do when a whole countryside has become addicted to the evil of which he is the parent? What will he do when the souls whom he seduced call out from hell for vengeance on his head? What will he do when the sins he taught pass on to future ages, and become a kind of original sin to generations yet unborn? Do I exaggerate? Is it not a proverb, and one which daily experience verifies: "like father, like son?" Tell me, has the sin of Luther died with him? Does it not grow and gather strength, like the mountain torrent, as it passes down the valley of ages? Cannot we say, in fact, that scandal has been the cause of all the evils that desolate the Church today, and that the scandal-

givers of the past, who now expiate their crimes in hell, still sin on earth in the persons of those whom they perverted?

4. What then? Is it not a principle of eternal justice that sin must be punished as much as it deserves; and that as the good will be rewarded for every good work, even down to the charitable act of giving a cup of cold water to the thirsty traveler; so the wicked will receive their meed of punishment for every idle word spoken during their wicked life? Nay, as there are virtues of special merit, for the practice of which God has reserved more munificent rewards in the next life, such as are promise to those who have zeal for His glory and the salvation of souls; so, also, we cannot doubt that there are special chastisements for those who, here below, withdraw others from giving Him the honor which is His due, and who pervert souls for whom our Lord gave His life. And, just as our Lord has promised that those who advance His glory amongst men; who labor to extend His kingdom; who instruct the ignorant unto justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity; so, also, we may judge that those who labor to destroy the kingdom of Jesus Christ; who, instead of instructing the ignorant, spread darkness, and error, and lying amongst men, will be reserved for special chastisements hereafter.

Examples of these chastisements on scandal-

givers are not wanting in Scripture. Jeroboam, for instance, drew away ten of the twelve tribes of Israel from God's service and taught them to worship idols. And for this sin the race of Jeroboam, says the First Book of Kings (XIII, 33), "was destroyed and blotted out from the face of the earth." Again, the sons of Heli, the high priest, gave scandal to the people and prevented them from offering sacrifice in the temple; and for this sin God rejected the whole family, and slew the evildoers. For, as He said to Samuel the prophet: "I have sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated by victims and offerings for ever."

But those threats that are pronounced on individual scandal-givers in the Old Testament are repeated in a far more terrible manner against all scandal-givers in the New. Hear with fear and trembling those dreadful words, you who have by word or act given occasion to another's sin. There is surely nothing more terrible in all Scripture: "Wo to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come; but, yet, wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh." "It were better for that man," says our Lord in another place, "that he had never been born." And again: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me; it were better for him that a millstone were tied

around his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Upon which I wish to remark that that ominous word "wo" contains both a threat and a curse—a threat of divine vengeance which will pursue him in after life; and a curse of an outraged God who declares that He will require the "Blood of Jesus Christ," shed for souls at the sinners' hands. "Wo," says St. Jerome, "smacks of destruction."

5. In reflecting on the conduct of different classes of people in the world, we cannot but think of how little those who give scandal to others make of their sin. They corrupt souls purchased by the Blood of Jesus Christ; and, after that, they eat, and drink, and laugh, and sleep, and take life as if nothing worthy of serious thought had happened.

Ah, but one day those sins will turn up again! It will be before the tribunal of the Eternal Judge—the same who declares that He will require the Blood He shed for souls at the sinners' hands. And what shall be His demeanor on the occasion? "I will meet them," He says, "as the she-bear meets the hunters who have robbed her of her whelps." God of Mercy, what an expression! "I will meet scandal-givers in judgment as the she-bear"—that most ferocious of wild beasts in the circumstances —"meets those who have robbed her of her whelps."

And is there no hope, then, for those who have rendered themselves guilty of this horrible sin, or, must they, alas, live on in despair? There is hope, dearly beloved, of making some reparation for the scandals of the past, and of yet obtaining mercy from God. Every sin that can be wept over can be pardoned. "A contrite and humble heart God will never despise." But to obtain the tears of repentance for the scandal-giver, this is a miracle of miracles.

Let us beg of God that the scandal-givers that are amongst us may obtain this most signal of mercies. And you, dearly beloved brother or sister, if your conscience tells you that you have been guilty of this sin, beg of God day and night for this grace of true repentance. Walk worthily hereafter, as becomes a true follower of Jesus Christ. Strive to repair as far as you can the evil of your past teaching and conduct. Pray to God daily for those whom you have drawn into sin. Quit not till death the way of humility and penance. It will conduct you still to the refuge of salvation.

RASH JUDGMENTS.

"Judge not, that you may not be judged: for, with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matt. VII, 1–2.)

I

1. In these words our Blessed Lord warns us against one of the meanest, yet most common sins to which men are addicted, namely, against rash judgments unfavorable to the character and actions of the neighbor. "Judge not," He says, "that you may not be judged: for, with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again."

It is of this sin that I would speak to you today, and I say that those who judge rashly act injuriously at once to our Lord and to the neighbor; to our Lord, inasmuch as they encroach on His rights as Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead; and to the neighbor whom they condemn without authority, without knowledge of the cause, and without formality of any kind.

I say, in the first place, that those who have the

temerity to judge their neighbor, judge him without authority and without power.

It is of faith that Jesus Christ has been constituted sole and sovereign Judge of all men, both living and dead. The Eternal Father and the Holy Ghost judge no one. They gave all their power on this matter, and ceded all their rights, to the Second Person of the most Holy Trinity, and this because of His Incarnation and the death which He suffered for the human race. It is then only the Saviour of the world who has the right to judge men, and, by consequence, all those who are so rash as to undertake to judge others, judge them without any authority or power.

They do much more; for they insolently usurp the power and authority of Jesus Christ, and dare to appropriate it.

It is true that earthly judges exercise this power of judging men, but this is only because the Saviour has imparted it to them.

But you, individuals, have you received this same right from the Sovereign Master? Are you judges or magistrates? Show us your titles, and then we will agree that you have the right to judge; but till then, allow us to say to you that you are usurpers of another's power, and that you carry matters to folly, to wish to take up that which by no means belongs to you.

You are as insensate as would be a simple merchant or a tradesman who, without being clothed with the authority of the governor, without being fortified with his power, would sit in the judge's chair and pronounce sentences and decrees.

Regret, then, the injury that you do to our Lord in usurping His authority and in taking away from Him this great privilege which He acquired by His death and Passion!

2. But those who judge rashly their neighbor, judge him not only without right, without power, and without authority, but they judge him moreover before the time, contrary to the express prohibition which God made through His Apostle, St. Paul. The time of judgment of each particular is deferred to his death, and the time of judgment for all men will be only at the end of the world after the General Resurrection: and you wish to pass this judgment now.

The Sovereign Judge awaits sinners to give them an occasion of entering into themselves and of doing penance, in order to procure for Himself a favorable judgment; and you pardon not your brother. You wish that he be taken red-handed without having time to repent, and you condemn him on the spot. If God had treated you thus, where would you be now? If He had judged you

as you deserved after you had committed sin, would you not be now in hell?

Behold then another cruel injury which you do to the Saviour of the world in forestalling His judgment.

You do Him a third injury, which is not less hurtful to Him, and it is that you presume to judge His subjects, His children, His disciples. "Why do you judge another man's servant?" says the Apostle; if he has run away, or if he falls, that concerns his master alone, and in no manner you, and you could not push temerity further than you do in this matter.

3. Those who judge their neighbor rashly do so not only without authority or power; they judge him also without formality.

When Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Judge, pronounces sentence on any one at the hour of death, He brings him before Him, examines him, and convicts him. Earthly judges observe a great number of formalities in judging a case, and if a single one is wanting, the judgment is null. The parties are cited. They are made to appear. They are given a certain time to defend themselves and to bring forward their titles and reasons: and you, you judge him in his absence. You condemn him without hearing his justifying reasons, a thing that is

not done even among Turks and the most barbarous nations. You condemn him on the spot, without examination, without consideration, and without any form or ceremony of trial, and you claim moreover that the sentences and decrees which you pronounce are irrevocable and without appeal.

But you will be very much deceived: you will be one day in terrible astonishment when you shall see all your judgments put in the balance of our Lord, and you shall see yourself judged without mercy because you have judged others in the same manner. And would you not well deserve it? For, what is more unjust, more irregular, and more crying than are all those judgments pronounced without right or authority, before the proper time, and without formality?

It is true, my dear brethren, is it not, that in this manner are pronounced every day so many private judgments to the disadvantage of your neighbor? Detest then these rash judgments, since they are so opposed to charity, and forbidden under so great penalties.

And for the future resolve to conduct yourself in regard to the alleged or the apparent faults of your neighbor as a good citizen conducts himself in regard to the trials that are carried to the justice halls: viz., as a private individual without authority or jurisdiction of any kind, and with the

conviction that the Sovereign Judge, Jesus Christ, will deal justly and mercifully with the accused at the proper time, even as you hope to be dealt with justly and mercifully by the same Jesus Christ in whose hands are all power and judgment, now, and forever.

II

1. Let me go on to say that they who so judge, sin especially in this that they judge without knowledge of the cause.

When the Sovereign Judge pronounces sentence on each one at the hour of death, He knows not only the depths of their consciences and penetrates the most hidden folds of their hearts, but He puts before the eyes of those He judges their criminal actions and omissions, and He shows them to them so clearly and so evidently that they avow with an entire and full conviction that they well deserve the sentence of condemnation that is pronounced upon them.

Earthly judges who are clothed with the authority of the Most High to judge other men, although it concerns only temporal goods, forget nothing to assure themselves of the truth before pronouncing a sentence or a decree. In a criminal process where there is question of death or some other

afflictive penalty, the guilty one is made to appear. He is given time to employ all the means he can find to justify himself. Witnesses are heard. They must be irreproachable. Their proofs must be clear as day.

When there are doubts the judge tries to oblige the accused to confess the truth, and to this effect he subjects him to a rigorous cross-examination. Finally, he pronounces only with fear and trembling the sentence or decree, especially if there be question of life. In civil cases when there is question of a moderate sum of money the judge examines with exactitude the titles and documents which establish the right of the parties concerned. Each one of the litigants has his attorney and counsellor. They take all the time necessary to probe the affairs to the bottom. What precaution in judging a matter of temporal interest! And you, mere private individuals, you judge your neighbor not only in his goods but in his honor, in his reputation, in his conscience; you judge him in his person, and you judge him with a frightful precipitancy and nearly always without knowledge. You pronounce sentence against him on the spot and you wish that this sentence be irrevocable and without appeal.

I say that you pronounce sentence always without knowledge of the cause. It is not on the knowl-

edge that you have of his interior, of his heart, of his conscience, of his intentions; all that is impenetrable to you. You have then only exterior and certain appearances upon which you base your judgment. Now I ask you how often are not those appearances deceitful? The Pharisee in the Gospel judged from appearances that the Publican was a sinner, and, meanwhile, he was justified, he was penitent and in the state of grace. So was the Magdalen at the time she was unjustly judged by the Pharisee of Naim. He whom you judge to be the enemy of God, because you have seen the appearances of sin in him, or because you believe you have seen them, may be entirely innocent of the crime which you have imputed to him, or he may have repented of it before your judgment of him. Your judgment is unjust, because it condemns him whom God has acquitted. How many times have not appearances deceived you? How many times have you believed to have seen or heard what was not, or what was a thing altogether different to what you thought? Ought not your past errors to make you wise for the future?

2. But there is still further question of knowing whether you are in the state of seeing external things such as they are. Does it not often happen to you as to those who look through colored glasses, and who have not taken care to see objects in their

natural color? These objects appear to them of the same color as are the glasses through which they see them? If the color is red, objects appear to them red, although they are of a color very different. When you examine the conduct of your neighbor, you see his works, not as they are, but as your passions represent them to you. You have hatred, jealousy, envy, against a person. The least thing that he does which does not please you is atrocious. A look, an act, a word, are so many crimes. A little conversation between persons of different sexes is company keeping, and connotes great disorder; a couple of drinks of liquor taken out of necessity indicates a formed habit of drunkenness.

The unruly passions of your heart work the same effect with regard to the life of your neighbor as does the microscope with regard to things you see by it. To look through a microscope one would say that a grain of sand was a cobblestone, and a needle, a bar of iron. It is thus that by means of your disordered passions a trifle in your neighbor becomes something frightful and insupportable.

III

1. But when you will not have any bad will, and your passions will not have blinded you, have

you enough of light and intelligence to be able to judge rightly?

And when it is true that you have sufficient light and intelligence; when it is true that you know perfectly well the state of your neighbor, his intentions, his views, his actions, ought you not still to abstain from judging him, because God has forbidden you, and because you have no right or power to judge? Meantime you will say to me: "when things are evidently bad, how refrain from judging?" If the actions or the words which you have seen or heard are so evidently bad that they cannot be excused, this is what you ought to do: After having taken all possible precautions to justify the conduct of your neighbor, whether by trying to find some favorable side and one susceptible of a good interpretation in what he has said or done, or by excusing his actions or words by means of his intentions, you must then conduct yourself as you are obliged to do in the case of bad thoughts. When you are attacked with thoughts of pride, of resentment, of impurity, of infidelity, or such like, you are taught to put forth all your efforts to chase them from your mind; so, also, when there comes a temptation to judge your brother, reject it immediately as you would a bad thought.

But you will ask me how you are to chase away

these things from your mind? They ever return. Then it suffices to do all you can to forget them, to combat them with fidelity and perseverance, and to be resolved to give them no countenance.

You cannot reply to this, my dear brethren, for all the same as you cannot say that it is impossible for you not to consent to a thought of impurity, or a thought against faith; so, also, you cannot allege that it is impossible for you not to judge; you are always master of your own will, otherwise God would have commanded you impossible things, a thing one cannot think of or say without blasphemy.

In place of judging your neighbor when you see him fall into some fault, you ought to have compassion on him. You ought to aid him, and sustain him by your prayers, by your good advice, by corrections given with prudence, and by all other means that Divine Providence will give you. You ought to humble yourselves at seeing others fall, and remember that if the Lord did not sustain you, you would fall into faults more grievous still. For, as St. Augustine remarks, "There is no crime that a man is not capable of committing if God by His grace does not prevent him from falling." "Let him who stands," says the Apostle, "take heed lest he fall."

2. Finally, to cure you of the itch you have for judging your neighbor, especially when you

think his conduct is evidently bad, reflect on the admirable conduct of our Lord with regard to the woman taken in adultery, of whom it is told in the Gospel. The Scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman who was taken in the commission of this detestable crime, and they said to Him: "Master, this unhappy woman was taken now in adultry. The law commands that those be stoned who abandon themselves to this crime. What do you judge?"

The fact was undoubted, since she was taken red-handed in the crime. The case was grave; the law, precise. What will Jesus Christ, the meek Saviour, do in the occasion? Can He prevent Himself from judging and condemning the guilty? Let us see. He stooped down and began to trace on the ground with His finger certain letters, and then arising He said to those who had led the woman before Him: "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her." He lowered Himself a second time and continued to write on the ground. After these men, put to confusion, had all left one after another, leaving the sinful woman alone with Jesus, He rose up, and seeing her He said to her: "Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee?" She said: "No man, Lord." And Jesus said to her: "Neither will I condemn thee. Go now in peace and sin no more."

Let you do the same, my dear brother or sister,

when there is question of judging your neighbor. However guilty he may appear to you, say to yourself: "If I were without sin I might have some right to judge sinners; but I am also as guilty as this man whom I am tempted to judge, and so in judging and condemning him I judge and condemn myself."

Learn then to conduct yourself in regard to the alleged or apparent faults of your neighbor after the manner I exhorted you to before, namely, as a private individual, without authority or jurisdiction of any kind, without sufficient knowledge of the cause, and without the means of instituting in the case a formal inquiry, and with the entire conviction that Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Judge, will deal justly and mercifully with him at the proper time, even as you hope to be dealt with justly and mercifully by Him, to whom belong all knowledge, and power, and jurisdiction, now and forever.

THE NECESSITY OF MORTIFYING OUR PASSIONS

"And when He entered into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold a great tempest arose in the sea so that the boat was covered with waves, but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awakened Him, saying: 'Lord, save us, we perish!' and Jesus saith to them: 'Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up He commanded the winds and the sea: and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: 'What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him'?" (Matt. VIII, 23–27.)

I

In no incident of our Lord's life does He appear to us in more godlike guise than in that narrated in this Gospel. Here He is presented to us, at one time sleeping tranquilly amid the storm, and again, standing on the prow of the sinking ship and commanding as a Master the winds and the sea; and "there came a great calm." And considering His divine tranquillity on the occasion when all others were in a state of panic, and the power exercised by Him over the furious elements, we are

made to share in the emotion of the disciples and wonderingly to inquire: "What manner of man is this; for the winds and the sea obey Him?"

"And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves." Now, in reflecting on this passage of the Gospel I cannot but think that those tempests that sweep down periodically over the little sea of Galilee are a lively figure of storms of another order that rage with no less disastrous results; I mean the storms of passion that rise up within us and threaten the eternal loss of our souls.

No, dearly beloved, the sea is not beaten with more furious storms than are our souls with passion; the winds which agitate it trouble not more impetuously its calm; the shipwrecks which there take place are neither more frequent nor more dangerous; the state of those who are thrown on its vast expanse without sail or rudder is not more perilous or more worthy of our pity than is that of so many who give themselves up to the violence of their passions. These shall most certainly be lost if they awake not Jesus Christ slumbering in their hearts by calling upon Him with a lively faith and confidence to have pity on them; and if this adorable Saviour, touched with their prayers, as He was with those of the Apostles, do not command the winds and the sea; that is to say, the furious ele-

ments of passion that rage within them, to be calm.

This leads me to address you today on the necessity of mortifying our passions. And, now, that I may do so with effect, let me first of all tell you what the passions are, and what are their number and utility; for, indeed, many do not understand their nature, and even philosophers, such as the Stöics of old, to which school belonged the great Cicero, have made mistakes about them, believing them to be by nature evil, when, of a truth, they are not.

The passions, then, are nothing more or less than the motions of our sensitive appetite, which are produced in us at the sight of sensible good or evil as shown us by the imagination. As such they are so many forces planted in us by God to help us in our operations; just as the forces of nature, the wind, heat, steam, electricity, are given us by God to bring about results necessary or useful in the world of nature or of art.

Neither are philosophers agreed as to their number, some giving a greater number, some giving a smaller. But following St. Thomas, the master of them all, I say, the passions are eleven; and they range themselves in two distinct categories. Some pertain to what may be called for want of a better term the desiderative appetite; and they are six: love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy and

sadness; and some to the irascible appetite: hope and despair, fear and audacity, and anger, which has no opposite as the others.

The passions then, considered in themselves and irrespective of our fallen condition, are good and necessary to us, and the gifts of an all-wise and bountiful God who endowed us with them at our creation.

But we are to take into consideration that our nature being wounded and thrown out of its equilibrium by sin, our lower appetites are liable to get out of the control of the governing powers of our soul, the mind and will; and the passions by their very vehemence may carry us to excess and disaster, just as the wind, one of the forces of nature, when it blows in moderation, brings about many useful results: it purifies the air, it tempers the heat of the sun, it carries with it a salutary moisture; but if it break out in storm, it spreads devastation far and wide, overthrows the works of man, and strews the coast with shipwreck and ruin. We must then mortify those passions, and keep them under strict control; even as the rider controls the fiery steed, with curb and bridle and compels him, wayward, fierce, intractible though he be, to curb his fierce career and humbly do his bidding.

II

1. We must, I have said, mortify our passions and keep them under strict control. This is true of all, but especially of two: viz., love and desire, because they are more vehement than the rest and more liable to lead us astray by the irregularity of their objects. These passions of love and desire, when drawn to the irregular indulgence of carnal and sensual pleasures, have ever been the bane of virtue in man, and have carried him to the worst excesses. In fact, since that first fatal pleasure tasted by our first parents in eating the forbidden fruit, everything is unruly in our hearts. Slaves of the flesh and of the senses, we feel a violent inclination for the indulgence of earthly gratifications. The beauty of creatures is become a snare for us; and our passion, allowed to have its way, knows no other rule in their use than its entire satisfaction.

Such are we when, left to ourselves, we follow the inclination of nature. Hence, that "corruption of all flesh" of which Scripture speaks. Hence, the deluge of disorders that held sway in the ancient world. Hence, the special vices of Paganism, and those foul practices so often alluded to by the Apostle, but which the corruption of that time made so common.

And can we say that that hateful vice is banished from the world in Christian times? Ah, my brethren, are we not reminded of the foul practices and vices indulged in even by people who are nominally Christians, and which are a blot, I will not say on the civilization, but even on the Christianity of our day? What is the cause of the hatred of God and religion, and the war against everything Christian and holy that we see today among so large a number of the inhabitants of the Old World? It may be attributed to this cause or to that; but if it be traced to its final source, it will be found to be none other than the corruption of the heart consequent on the unbridled indulgence in impure love and desire that has taken possession of those peoples.

The prophet of old put the question: "Why do the nations rage, and the people devise vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes," that is to say, the leaders of public opinion "met together against the Lord and against His Anointed One." Their watchword is: "Let us break their bonds asunder"—the holy shackles of the Commandments—"let us cast their yoke away from us"—the light yoke of Christ's law, which really makes us free. And as was said with the approval and the applause of his audience by one of their orators on a recent occasion: "As for you, Chris-

tians, we leave to you the vain hope of the heaven to come; but for us, we intend to enjoy our heaven here. Give us here in abundance women, and wine, and music, and we are content to abide by the hell of the hereafter with which you threaten us." And with those sentiments in their hearts, and with those words on their lips, they rise up to make war against the Lord and His Church, and they try to blot out the very name of God from the vocabulary and even from their hearts. "The impious said in his heart: 'there is no God.' "

2. Thank God things have not come to such a pass with us, and it is unlikely that we shall witness religious persecution, at least in our generation, in this free country. But can we say that the same fell cause, the corruption of the heart and the loss of the religious sense consequent on the indulgence in impure love and desire, is not rife amongst us? Ah, my brethren, this is a matter I do not like to go into; but this I will say; Why is it we see so few men approaching those altar rails to receive the Bread of Life; or, rather, why do we see so many men, young and old, who absent themselves, aye, for months and years from the Sacraments? Why so many who almost entirely neglect prayer? who miss Mass on Sundays? Why so many who show a general breakdown of religion in their lives? I admit there may be different causes; neg-

lect, worldliness, and others; but can you say that the great and general cause is not the corruption of morals and the apathy of soul resultant on the indulgence of carnal pleasures? Again, why so many plague spots in our cities, as is known to all, and the upkeep amongst us of so many houses of ill-fame, and of the thousands of immoral women who frequent them? Ah, my brethren, the cause is the same, the indulgence of the passions of impure love and desire. It behooves all, therefore, to mortify their passions and keep them under strict control, and especially those most dangerous ones of which I speak.

3. This necessity is enjoined by the clear teaching of Scripture. St. Paul was not content with exhorting the Colossians to lay aside the old vices which they gave themselves up to when in Paganism; he would, moreover, have them mortify their passions which lead to these vices, and are the cause and source of them. "But now," says he, "lay ye all away the sins in which you walked when you lived in them; anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech; mortify the members of the animal man that is within you; fornication, impurity, the love of pleasure, and bad desires." Pay attention to what the Apostle says here. He teaches that the occupation of a Christian in this life con-

sists in destroying in himself two things: the first is sin. He must not be a rogue, or an impure man, or an angry person, or a blasphemer. "Lay aside all these," because a single one of them is capable of destroying you. It is better that you slay them with the sword of mortification, than that they should slay your soul by your indulging in them.

But is it sufficient to make war on the vices? No, we must moreover attack the passions that lead to them. "Mortify your love of pleasure and evil desires."

Now this is the point where many fail. They imagine that it is sufficient to avoid certain bad sins. "I am not," they will say, "a thief or a murderer"; but as to sinful thoughts and desires and the passions which lead to them, they easily overlook them. Is this to be truly converted? No, surely: you have left, my dear brother, the embers under the ashes. At the presence of the first dangerous object passion will be rekindled and will consume within you every vestige of virtue. You have cleansed the outside of the platter and of the cup; but you have left the inside dirty. The fever of your anger, of your sensuality, may have left you a little; but not having got rid of the evil germ, it will return again, and you will fall more dangerously than before.

Hence the Holy Spirit, speaking of the man who allows his passions to sway him, says that "the irregularities of his youth will penetrate to his bones, and will go down with him even to the tomb." (Job XX, 21.) How terrible are these words, my brethren! I pray you, reflect on them a little.

There is a young man who, say, at the age of eighteen or twenty, leads a soft, indulgent life, and who, carried away by his passions, runs like a wild horse wherever his caprice or love of pleasure urges him. This young man, I allow, goes occasionally to confession. But is he truly converted? No. His passions, fervid and unmortified, become for him unfortunate mothers, who, fertile for his ruin, ever give birth to new sins. And the multitude of his vices becomes so great that his bones are filled with them. Sins of his youth; sins of his mature years; sins of his old age; all these are insensibly multiplied; all these are heaped up one upon another. And as in order to extract the marrow from the bones it is necessary to break them; so, without an extraordinary grace of God nothing can make him quit his sins except the separation of his soul from his body by death. What do I say? "They will go down with him to the tomb," and follow him to hell! Whence I conclude that one of the greatest artifices of the devil to prevent the

conversion of sinners is the sweet but false persuasion which he puts into their heads, that no matter what crimes they may have committed, it is enough, in order to do away with them, to find a priest to whom they may confess them, and who is also found easy to give absolution for them. It is thus that they perpetuate their disorders without putting themselves to the trouble of repressing their criminal passions or of destroying their bad habits.

4. Take in hand seriously, then, the arduous work of mortifying your passions, and prosecute it unrelentingly throughout life. It is the first and most important requirement of the Christian law. And hence Christ, our Master has said: "If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself." And St. Paul, speaking in the name of Christ, said, and his words should sink into our hearts and remain there all our lives: "Those that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." Those that are Christ's; that is to say, those who have a claim on Him, and who belong to Him; not those who put on the mask of Christianity and call out to Him, "Lord, Lord," but preserve within themselves an uncircumcised and pagan heart; those, I say, have crucified the flesh, exteriorly by salutary fasts and austerities; but they have gone further and have moreover cru-

cified themselves interiorly by the mortification of their vices and sinful passions; the vices, by extirpating them from their souls; and the passions, which generate the vices and enslave the flesh, by keeping them under strict control.

ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP IN A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY [1]

I

1. In contemplating the event that is to take place among you today, I am reminded of the blessing pronounced long ago by our Lord on Zachaeus, the chief of the publicans of Jericho. This man, moved by an interior impulse of grace, conceived a longing desire to behold our Lord as He passed through the streets of his native city, and for this he was rewarded by the unexpected announcement from the Saviour Himself that He purposed to lodge and dine with him that very day. And our Lord, entering into his house and seeing his change of heart and his generous intentions with regard to the poor and those whom he had defrauded, pronounced on him His immortal words, which contained both a blessing and a prophecy: "This day, O Zachaeus, is salvation come into thy house."

You, my friends, who have received so gladly

[1] Preached preparatory to the erection of the Rosary Confraternity in a parish.

the grace of the mission which these past few weeks we have been conducting among you, and with such an abundance of spiritual results, have by your generous acceptance of that grace, moved Him from whom cometh all good gifts to confer on you another and a still greater grace, and one whose effects, we trust, will last for all time; namely the establishment among you of the Confraternity of the Rosary.

It is proper on an occasion such as this to delineate for you, first, the advantages of membership of such a society; and, second, the special, I should rather say, the unique advantages accruing to those who are members of the Confraternity of the Rosary.

The general advantages of membership in a religious society I will try to expound for you now, while I will leave the exposition of the special advantages of membership of the Confraternity of the Rosary for another occasion.

As to the advantages of membership in a confraternity in general, they may be classed under the four following heads: First, special graces conferred by God on the members; second, the advantage of association of spiritual gifts and services; third, extrinsic helps to the overcoming of our weaknesses and passions and to the acquirement of Christian virtue; and, lastly, the blessing

of the Church and her generous bestowal of indulgences.

That the Almighty confers great and special graces on the members of a religious society, we can infer from His usual way of dealing with us. When God opens up to any one a new and privileged method of life; when He gives him a vocation for a special state to which He has not called all Christians, He invariably confers on such a one the graces belonging to that state—graces which will enable him to fulfill its duties with ease and perfection.

And a confraternity is a special society existing within the commonwealth of the Church, where the members are brought into a closer union of charity with one another than are Christians in general; where they are called to a closer imitation of Jesus Christ; and where special duties are to be performed which the general body of the Christians are not called on to fulfill.

We can have no manner of doubt, therefore, that God gives to the members of a confraternity special and great graces that He does not confer on Christians in general.

Nay, and do we not see these graces acting and producing their glorious results in the souls of the members, even from the first day of their admission into the confraternity? Who that has any

experience of a confraternity has not witnessed the salutary change brought about in those who before were scandal-givers and the slaves of depraved habits? Who has not seen the well-disposed advance daily towards the goal of high perfection? Who has not witnessed the triumph of grace over nature even to the almost entire suppression of the ordinary failings of human nature, and the acquirement of a glorious state of virtue while still engaged in worldly occupations?

Dear brethren, I assure you as one who has had long experience in the charge of souls, that I do not know a more admirable means for the suppression of vice among a people, and for their advancement to a high and rare state of virtue, than that of associating them as members of a religious confraternity.

2. A second advantage of membership is the association of spiritual gifts and services. There is nothing more admirable in the teaching of our holy religion than the doctrine which tells us that the members of the true Church share in all the spiritual gifts with which she is endowed, and that they have the power of benefiting one another by their mutual good works and satisfactions. These results follow from what is commonly known as the Communion of Saints. And, according to this doctrine, it follows, moreover, that the virtues

and successes acquired by individual members redound to the advantage of all.

Being members of one another, according to the famous saying of St. Paul, the graces and virtues acquired by individual members become a sort of family possession, and the credit thus gained by them with God makes Him more propitious to the members of the Church in general, inasmuch as He sees in them the brothers and sisters of those who, by their merits, become His special favorites.

And if this be so in regard to the Church in general, where the members form one great commonwealth; with greater reason does this doctrine apply to a religious confraternity, where the bonds of fraternal charity are drawn closer, and the members form, as it were, a family within the Church whose spiritual interests are more closely interwoven than even in the Church itself.

See, my brethren, the unparalleled advantage of intercommunication of spiritual interests and services with a family such as is that of the Rosary, whose influence extends to the uttermost regions of the earth—with a family, many of whose members are raised to a high power and credit with God—with a family whose accumulated merits are handed down to us through a period extending over several centuries; and that has been through all that time associated with an Order of great

merit in the Church, and whose saints, according to the famous saying of one of the Popes, are "as numerous as the stars."

II

1. A third advantage is that members have in a confraternity the aid of extrinsic helps to the overcoming of their weaknesses and passions, and to the acquirement of Christian virtue. As to those extrinsic aids, let me say that I look on them as among the very greatest that can be given to a soul struggling amid the temptations of the world.

These aids are the good example of fellow members; the frequent reminders to the performance of their religious duties; the assistance at the monthly or weekly meetings, as the case may be, where the word of God is announced and the results of united prayers are received from heaven; the frequentation of the Sacraments. All these and many other helps are provided for us as members of a confraternity.

2. Dearly beloved, when we remember how great is our forgetfulness of spiritual things and of our religious duties—when we remember how easy it is to discourage us in the performance of good and to throw us back into a life of despondency and unconcern for our spiritual well-being—when we

remember our many frailties and our helplessness in the performance of spiritual good without the frequent interposition of extrinsic aids, we shall be led to an appreciation of those helps provided for us in a confraternity, and shall thank God for the crowning grace which His providence has this day introduced among us.

To me, who have been all my priestly life more or less in touch with the working of religious confraternities and have witnessed the great effects brought about in souls by the aid of those extrinsic helps, this day appears as one of the most blessed that has passed over you for many years. And if it were permitted to me to unveil for you the future, I would show you as the result of the proper use of those extrinsic helps, the lovely spectacle of a regenerated people—of a people penetrated with the spirit of religion. I would show you the children of the Rosary gathered together at evening in every household in the parish and reciting in common the sublime prayer first given to the world by the Queen of Heaven herself, and which was the solace and stay of your sainted forefathers in the days of persecution. I would show you again every first Sunday of the month, those altar rails crowded with the same Rosarians who, with chastened hearts and pure consciences, come to receive their Sacramental God. I would show

you once again the sweet odor of edification given by the members of the Rosary Confraternity to the inhabitants of all the surrounding districts, and this whole parish itself blooming like a garden with the rarest flowers of virtue. I would show you, finally, a state of society which would remind you of the former spiritual glory of our country where almost every parish rejoiced in the possession of its confraternity, and one of the greatest subjects for esteem was to be accounted a worthy child of Mary, the Queen of the Holy Rosary.

3. But let me go on to the last advantage of membership of a confraternity such as that which is this day erected among you—and it is the participation by members in the indulgences of the church for the performance of diverse duties connected with the confraternity.

Dearly beloved, just as a gift is a token of esteem on the part of the giver to the recipient; so the concession of the indulgences of the Church, which are so many spiritual gifts, to any institution, is one of the ordinary marks of appreciation of the excellence of that institution by the head of the Church, and a testimony as to its efficacy for the sanctification of souls. And if this be so, I think you are happy in the introduction among you today of the most highly endowed institution

that ever existed in the Church from its foundation down to the present day.

But who shall measure the value of the indulgences granted? Let me say that the power of granting indulgences is among the most priceless treasures purchased by Jesus Christ for His spouse at the cost of His suffering and death; and that, after the power of forgiving the eternal debt due to sin, exercised by the Church in the tribunal of Penance, comes the kindred power of releasing men from the temporal debt due to the same sin by means of indulgences.

Dear brethren, how many and grievous are our daily sins; and if every sin must be atoned for with the utmost rigor, what an appalling debt do we not owe to divine justice for the evil acts of a life-time!

How, then, should we not appreciate the maternal kindness of the Church in giving us in such abundance, through our Confraternity, the means wherewith to pay off that overwhelming burden of satisfactions due to God for a life that has been one tissue of imperfections and sins, each of which must otherwise be satisfied for, either here or hereafter?

Let me appeal to you, then, once more to give your names to this holy association now established

among you, and when you do join, be faithful in the fulfillment of its rules. Zealously bestir yourselves to advance its interests, to enhance its works for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls, whether within or without the organization.

CLOSE OF A MISSION

"Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them." (Matt. VII, 15–22.)

I

1. I feel sure that the sentiment that is predominant in your hearts this evening is one of thankfulness to Almighty God for the many graces He has bestowed on us during the past fifteen days. Yes, let us confess it in the fullness of our hearts, the grace of a mission is one of the most precious that a loving and provident God bestows on a community or parish. It is a grace that, when well corresponded with, produces abundant fruit in souls, and leaves a lasting impression, not only on individuals, but likewise on whole peoples.

I must confess that it was a source of great consolation to us (and I think I can say the same for your respected parochial priests) to witness the earnestness and devotion with which you responded to the call of God.

And I cannot refrain from testifying to the

splendid zeal you manifested in coming, many of you from long distances, morning and evening to the sermons, and to the edifying patience with which you waited often for hours for confession.

But the good work that we have taken in hand does not end here. We have indeed for the present triumphed. We have, I trust, cleared the devil with his works and pomps from every corner of the parish. But this is not all that we proposed to ourselves to effect, nor that God intends as the fruit of our labors.

It would be little for us, Christians, children of the Sacred Heart; it would be little for us, I say, to have for a while purified ourselves from sin, if afterwards we should unhappily relapse into it. Nay, it would be little, I venture to say, to remain free from mortal sin during the remainder of our lives, if this were all we were to accomplish.

Far nobler, far holier than this should be the aspiration of a Christian, whose whole aim during life should be towards the attainment of high sanctity. For, was it not of us that St. Peter spoke when he said: "You are a chosen generation, a holy people, a priestly nation"? Was it not of us that St. Paul spoke when he said to the Christians of his day, that by their vocation to the Christian religion they were "called to be saints"? And what does the name we bear signify, if not that we

should be a saintly people? For does not the name, Christian, signify a follower of Christ? And how can we be followers of Christ except by the cultivation of His virtues? Was it not for this end, and for this end alone, that our Blessed Lord founded His Church, that it might be a seminary of saints who by their virtues might be made worthy to people heaven?

It was to give us facilities to attain this sanctity that He chose us from out the millions of men and women who people the vast regions of the earth, and called us to the Christian religion. It was in furtherance of this end that He favored us with so many graces during our whole life. It was for this end that He instituted the Sacraments; that He conferred on us the privilege of prayer; that He enrolled us in the holy society of which He Himself is the Head. It was, finally, for this end that His sweet providence ordained that this mission should, in the ordinary course of events, take place among you.

Away, then, with that mischievous prejudice that would have you believe that sanctity belongs to those alone who are called to the priesthood and the cloister; such a thought could come only from the father of lies, who would always keep your souls occupied with worldly cares and aspirations.

Away with that falsehood that would make be-

lieve that you fulfill your duties as Christians by merely going to the Sacraments now and again to rid yourselves of the intolerable burden of your mortal sins! Such a life would be merely a travesty of the one a Christian ought to lead; and the man or woman who would lead it would be a monster in the moral order, and worthy of reprobation by Almighty God.

Away with all that would lead you to believe that you are in the way of salvation, unless you aspire to become saints! For, I say to you again that, being Christians, you should be little Christs in your own way by the copying of His virtues; and unless you aspire to be like Christ here, you shall scarcely reign with Him hereafter. This object you must keep before you at all times; and it was to renew formally this resolution and to direct your wills to the attainment of this end that this mission was procured for you by your worthy pastor.

2. If indeed I were to judge by your present disposition, by your earnest determination this evening to press forward to the attainment of this end, I would assure myself of the sanctification of each one of you. For I know that the wish that is predominant in your hearts this evening, is to serve God faithfully hereafter, and thus to put your souls beyond the danger of the loss of your eternal end.

But, dearly beloved, we are not to rely implicitly

on our present dispositions. The future will bring a relaxation of your present enthusiasm. The clear remembrance of the eternal truths which we have been contemplating during the past fortnight will by degrees fade from your memories. By degrees, also, the remembrance of the lights and graces that accompanied our meditations will become obscured amidst worldly preoccupations, and the good resolutions that we formed; and the fear for what may follow is the thing that tempers my present joy, and brings into my soul a tinge of sadness.

For then will be the time that false prophets will arise among you to deceive you. These false prophets are the temptations of the devil, the scandals of the world, and your own wicked passions.

These false prophets will come among you "in the garb of sheep," in their blandest and most seductive form. The evil one will try to instill into your minds the thought that, after all, there is no need of making so much fuss about gaining heaven; that perhaps you were deceived during the mission, and formed exaggerated notions about virtue; that living in the world you must be as everyone else about you; free in your ways; go into dangerous occasions; that even if you fall, you can as on former occasions, rise again; and that God's hand will not be shortened in your regard.

The world, that tempestuous sea of strife and

scandal that surges round you, will try to engulf you in the flood of its bad example, and make you adopt its maxims, and allow yourself to drift along on the tide of its passions and prejudices.

And, last of all, your own passions and sensual appetites will act as false prophets in your regard. All these enemies of your salvation will in turn solicit you to sin.

What then, dearly beloved, are you to do that you may save yourselves from these enemies, and preserve intact the precious graces acquired during this mission?

Ah, "beware of them!" "They come to you in the clothing of sheep," but interiorly they are "ravening wolves," whose only aim is to tear you to pieces. "By their fruits you shall know them." What happiness can they bring you? What happiness did the commission of sin heretofore bring you? On the contrary, did it not make your life a foretaste of hell by the remorse of conscience it occasioned you? No, it is impossible for an evil tree to bring forth good fruit."

Beware then of them and strengthen yourselves against their solicitations by a diligent practice of virtue. And that you may arm yourselves the more against future falls, reflect on the evils of relapse. Now, when we come to examine those

evils, we find that they have regard both to God and to the sinner himself.

In the first place, I say that were you after this mission to relapse into the sins out of which you may have arisen in those days, you would be guilty of the grossest injury to the Almighty. And, in truth, what greater injury could you inflict on the Almighty than that, after He had with a goodness and charity which could belong only to the Supreme Being, mercifully pardoned you, you should again abandon Him for some sensual gratification, and trample under foot His benefits?

3. But how terrible are the effects a relapse would bring upon yourselves? It would, in the first place, despoil you of all the spiritual goods acquired by you during your past life, and especially during this mission.

Consider, dearly beloved, all your efforts for the attainment and preservation of virtue during your past life, all that your conversion cost you. How many prayers and tears? How much did it not cost you to make a good confession?—the rigorous examination of conscience; the humiliating acknowledgment of your sins; the violence you did to yourselves in breaking the chains of your bad habits. Well, all that would be labor lost were you to fall again into sin. Yes, were you to

pass fifty years in the practice of a most austere life; were you to equal a St. Paul or a St. Anthony in merit, and after that had you the misfortune to fall into a single mortal sin, all your past good works would be rendered useless; all would be as if they had never been.

But what is even more terrible is the extreme difficulty of rising out of the state to which relapse reduces the sinner. This difficulty is in some sense insurmountable; for relapse dries up the very source of vitality in the soul and leaves it ever afterwards in a tottering state of virtue.

This is no theory of mine. It is the teaching of the Fathers of the Church, founded on the words of Scripture. Pay attention to the words of St. Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews; for they are certainly terrible. "It is impossible," says the great Apostle; "it is impossible that those who have been enlightened by the light of grace, who have become the temples of the Holy Ghost, who have tasted the gift of God"; that is to say, who have shared in the banquet of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist; "and who have afterwards miserably fallen into sin, that they should return from this state by sincere penance." I know, dearly beloved, that this impossibility is not absolute. But it is certain that the difficulty is very great and almost insurmountable.

The prophet Jeremias explains the reason of this difficulty when he says that a relapse is "a very grievous wound, an incurable fracture." Yes, for just as in the physical order an ulcerating wound, a relapse into a grievous illness, a fracture repeated many times in the same member, is cured only with difficulty, and scarcely ever satisfactorily; so also, the ulcerating conscience of the relapsing sinner is scarcely ever restored to complete soundness. On the contrary, he becomes more blinded and hardened day by day, till at last he falls into the state of final impenitence.

You see then that the evil of relapse has something deadly in it which is different from the mere guilt of sin; and that the crime of drunkenness, or impurity, or any other to which you would give yourself up again after this mission, would have an immensely aggravated malignity as regards its effects both towards Almighty God and towards yourself; and this malignity may induce God to abandon you in your sin and give you over to reprobation.

II

1. What then, you may ask, are you to do? and what preservatives are you to employ against future relapse so much to be feared and hated; and what

means are you to adopt that you may carry out the intentions of Christ in your regard, and become the saint that it was His intention to make you in calling you to the Christian religion?

Well, brethren, there are three preservatives that I wish to recommend to you, three means for your future preservation and progress in the way of virtue. And if you carefully employ them, they will infallibly produce the result you desire, and will not only save you from relapse, but will moreover make you advance in holiness and merit before God.

The first of these means is to abstain from the occasions of sin; that is to say, those persons and places and employments and amusements that you know would be dangerous to your virtue.

Brethren, we are very weak and fragile creatures. The least scandal has its bad effect upon us; fans our passions, brings back the remembrance of things perhaps long forgotten and buried in the past.

And if we are so weak, so fragile, we must have regard for our weakness, and must not be measuring it with the strength of temptation. For if we do, the devil will not fail to introduce himself on the side of our adversary, and bring us into sin. People of delicate constitutions ordinarily try to avoid risks of contracting dangerous illnesses. They

shun cold draughts, and damp clothes, and great fatigues, and late hours, and whatever may invite a return of their besetting malady. And how is it that we see the weakest and most fragile in virtue rush with the greatest recklessness into the midst of dangerous occasions, with almost certain danger of falling?

Brethren, each one of you can know, if you but look into your heart tonight, where your weakness lies; and you can judge also where the occasion is that would bring about your fall.

That occasion may be for one the saloon. It may be for another a dangerous companion, one who is accustomed to speak on forbidden subjects. It may be a person of a different sex whose company you frequented in the past. It may be an amusement, an employment, or something else that yourself only know.

Dear brother, dear sister, that occasion, cost what it may, you must no longer frequent; and this resolution you must make before you leave the church this evening. If that occasion were as dear to you as your very life, remove yourself from it you must, else your fall is as assured as if it had already taken place. Our Blessed Lord was a good director of souls, and He knew right well the remedy to prescribe for the weak. And what was that remedy? "If thy right eye scandalize thee"

(if the occasion of sin were as dear to thee as thy right eye) "pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee to enter heaven with one eye than to enter hell with two."

You must remove yourself from the occasion, and this is the strong resolution you are to form this evening; else you are lost as surely as if you had already fallen. "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it," says Scripture; and if you boldly frequent the occasion of sin, you will surely fall.

And on this point I would remind you of a thing that perhaps you did not before attend to: and it is, that to frequent the occasion of sin, and thereby to endanger its commission, is in itself a violation of God's law, and therefore, a sin. For you must remember that the moral law forbids us not only to violate that law, but even to endanger its violation; and this you do by going unnecessarily into the occasion of sin. If then you go freely into an occasion of drunkenness, or impurity, or any other sin, where you foresee that you will be in evident danger of falling; know for certain that by doing so you are already guilty of sin against the virtue that you know will be endangered, and also of presumption in thrusting yourself into an occasion where without a special grace from God you can scarcely save yourself from falling.

2. The second preservative against relapse, and the second help to the practice of virtue, is frequent and earnest prayer.

We are all weak, as I have said, and the difficulties we have to meet with in the spiritual life are great and incessant. But God, who ordained us to attain sanctity, did not leave us without the most powerful means for overcoming these difficulties and advancing in virtue. And the most universal and efficacious of these means is the practice of prayer. Yes, let the world and hell together oppose us in our struggle for justice; we shall, if we are men and women of prayer, triumph over all, and gain our end without fear of failing. This is what St. James teaches us. "Is anyone," he says, "weak among you? Let him pray and strength shall be given him from on high." This is what the Lord Himself teaches us many times in the Gospel; and though heaven and earth pass away, the word of the Lord shall be fulfilled. Hear then with gratitude these words full of the promise of eternal life: "All things whatsoever you ask the Father in My name, believe most certainly that you shall receive, and it shall so happen to you."

"All things whatsoever you ask." I know, dear brethren, that those words bear explanation when we speak of temporal favors. But in those things that concern eternal life, the acquiring of virtue,

the overcoming of temptation, the attaining of sanctity, they bear no explanation. We have our Lord's word for it that the treasures of grace are at our service, if only we ask for them by sincere and earnest prayer. And this assurance He confirms in another place with a most solemn oath: "Amen, amen, I say to you" (and those words mean according to our Lord's custom, "I solemnly assure you on the word of God") "that whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you."

And surely if we had not our Lord's word at all for it, we should know that it is God's most earnest will that we grow in sanctity. When, therefore, we pray for grace to live well, we pray for that which is dearest to God's heart; and, therefore, He will not and cannot refuse us. "Pray then at all times, lifting up your hands to the Father of grace; for such is the will of God, in Christ Jesus, to you all." "Pray, and strength shall be given you from on high." "Be faithful in prayer," morning, noontide, evening. Be like the psalmist, who speaks to the Lord and says: "It is my custom to present myself before You, O Lord, in the morning; my eyes have preceded the sun, that I might meditate upon Your word; I sought You from the day of day." And again: "Seven times a day I have spoken words of praise concerning you." "And at

night I wash my bed with the tears of prayer and compunction of heart." Thus will you increase in grace and virtue, and it can be said of you in the words of the psalm: "Blessed is the man who meditates on the law of the Lord day and night; He shall be like the tree that is planted by the running stream, which brings forth its fruit in due season."

3. The third and last help that I recommend to you to enable you to persevere in grace and to grow in sanctity, is to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Communion regularly and devoutly.

How choice are the graces, dearly beloved, that our Blessed Lord has prepared for us in these Sacraments? In the Sacrament of Penance, we are washed and made clean in the "Blood of the Lamb," and our poor wounded and bruised souls are healed and strengthened; and in the Blessed Eucharist the "Bread of life" is given us for the nourishment of our souls. "My flesh is meat, indeed," says Christ, "and My blood is drink, indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood shall live for ever, and I will raise him up on the last day." "Your fathers did eat manna," but the manna being a corruptible food, they died; but "he that shall eat worthily of this Bread, which is My flesh, shall not die the death of the wicked, but shall possess life eternal." "Eat ye all of this," He continues, "for it is My body, and do this for a

commemoration of Me." Yes, do this frequently for a commemoration of Me. "If you wish to have life," the life of grace, "and to have it more abundantly," you must partake often of this banquet of the Lord.

Holy Communion is the "Bread of life." Brethren, if you partook not of corporal food and drink, or if you partook of them but seldom, you would starve and die. Is it any wonder, then, that we see so many souls fall into the spiritual death of mortal sin, since they partake so seldom of this divine and life-giving food?

But how often, you will ask, are you to approach the Holy Sacrament? I will tell you. There is a rule in your society that you are to go to Confession and Communion at least once a month. Once a month at least; this rule should never be transgressed, and if you do not habitually keep up to it, then, I say, you are unfit to belong to this holy fellowship, and your name should be struck off the roll-book of its members.

But would I limit you to a monthly reception of the Sacrament? No, my brethren, far from it. On the contrary, I would exhort you all, young and old, to go once a fortnight, or even once a week, to the Sacraments. Yes, brethren, I would like to see all of you who have your sanctification at heart go several times a week, with the sanction of your

ordinary confessor, to the Holy Table. For, this is the practice of pious Christians all over the Church, and the most earnest desire of her pastors. This was the practice of, I will not say the saints, but of devout Christians in every age. Witness the reference to this practice among the early Christians in that most lovely period of the Church's history. They "broke the bread of life daily," says St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles—a practice which produced such beautiful fruits that, as the Evangelist continues, "they had but one heart and one soul in Christ." The promulgation of those important decrees of our late most holy father, Pope Pius X, calling upon all the faithful to receive Holy Communion frequently, even daily, is fresh in our memories; and he would have even our little children of seven and eight partake of the sacred Banquet daily also. And St. Liguori, the great Doctor, whose opinions have such weight in the Church, exhorts all who have their sanctification well at heart to approach the Holy Table frequently. And what does the word frequently mean in the sense of the holy Doctor? It means, not monthly, not fortnightly, not weekly Communion; but it means daily Communion, or Communion at least several times a week. And the same holy Doctor would have all, young and old, go if possible to Confession once a week.

See then, dear brethren, what the frequenting of the Sacraments means. See the work that is before you. You are to aspire unceasingly to be saints. You are to guard diligently against relapse. And for the attainment of these ends you must adopt the three general means that I have indicated to you. Your are to avoid the occasions of sin; your life is to be one of constant and earnest prayer; you are to frequent the Sacraments regularly, if not frequently.

Let these be the resolutions you are to make tonight, and that you are to strengthen yourselves in during the coming days. And if you be faithful in the carrying out of these means, I, on the part of God, promise you great aids from heaven; a happy and a holy life here, and hereafter the possession of the great end we took a survey of in the beginning of our mission, the end that was laid out for you in the counsels of God, even the possession of God Himself for all eternity.

SERMON ON THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

I

1. Among the joys that affect a faithful people perhaps there is none more spiritual, none more unselfish than that experienced when they see their parish church, the creation of their piety and generosity, thrown open for the solemn worship of God.

Such a joy is yours today, dearly beloved, and I think I interpret the feelings of the Right Rev. Bishop and the many priests and other guests who have come here to take part in the sacred ceremony of dedication, in congratulating you on the accomplishment of this memorable event. For many months now you have been viewing these walls rise slowly under the builders' hands. You have watched with interest the insertion of these tracery windows. You saw the uplift of the graceful spire. And now, when the last scantling of scaffolding is removed, you behold with admiration and pride your parish church stand forth a thing of beauty

and credit to designer and builder alike, lending picturesqueness to a scene already lovely, where nature and art seem to combine to make your town a beauty spot, even in this lovely and favored land. Well then may you cry out in the words of the noble psalm of dedication: "This is a day which the Lord hath made; let us exult and rejoice in it."

And we also, who have come here to take part in the proceedings of this festive occasion, share heartily in your joy. With you we rejoice because we see in the opening of this church an extension of the worship of God on earth. We rejoice because another altar is erected on which the Victim of Calvary will be daily immolated in acknowledgment of God's supreme excellence and sovereignty. We rejoice because a new tribune is set up amongst us where our Blessed Lord will repose, and where, seated on the throne which His mercy has erected, He will continue day after day to distribute His graces; where He will give light to those who are in darkness, comfort to those in sorrow, and where He will strengthen the weak who may be tottering in the ways of His commandments.

We rejoice, my dear brethren, because another chair of truth is established in the midst of us, where the teaching of the Gospel will be repeated, where the holy faith which saved the world and without which no one can be saved, will be brought

constantly to remembrance, and where God's pure law, which is a lamp to guide our footsteps here on earth, will ever be inculcated, with its tremendous sanction of eternal punishment and eternal reward.

We rejoice because a new tribunal of mercy is here erected, where the minister of God, acting under the divine commission, will receive the repentance of the sinner, wipe away the tears of the penitent, and say to him: "In the name of the living God, go in peace; your sins are forgiven you." We rejoice for all this, my brethren, when we see a new place of worship thus opened. And this joy is enhanced when the new church is opened among a young and vigorous community such as yours, and in a land where till recent times barbarism and infidelity reigned. And we see in it a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaias concerning the triumph of the Church of God. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and stretch out the coverings of thy tabernacles; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt pass on to the right hand and the left. For He that made thee shall rule over thee; the Lord of hosts is His name." And seeing it we feel ourselves witness and partake in its fulfillment; we feel ourselves the "domestics of God, built," as St. Paul says, "on the foundation of the apostles and martyrs, Jesus

Christ Himself being the great corner stone."

2. And what is this church destined to be for you, my dear people, in whose midst it has been raised? What a part will it play, not merely in the religious, but even in the domestic life of your town and countryside? With you whose faith is so vivid and practical, the church and the home are co-ordinate terms, and are linked by indissoluble ties. At all the great turning-points of your lives you will come here to have them sweetened and sanctified. Hither the new-born babe will be borne by its kindred to receive the waters of Baptism at the beginning of its life; and hither, at its close, shall his lifeless body, helpless again, be borne by his kindred that he may rest awhile and receive the blessings of the Church before they lay him in his grave.

Between these two extremes of human experience, what a host of others no less striking present themselves to our speculation today? We see the little children led hither by their priests, and prattle their innocent prayers to Him who loves them so—prayers that have more to do with our lives than is dreamed of in our philosophy. Hither on some later day shall the youth of the country come on the threshold of life's battle, to receive from the consecrated hand of the shepherd of their souls the strengthening unction that is to stay them

up in the heat and burden of the day. And here shall the youth and the maiden, dutifully desirous of God's blessing on their wedded life, be bound at the altar by the indissoluble bond of Christian marriage, and consecrate their happiness and their new-made home.

There will be those whose hearts will not let them forget to come here when life goes well with them, and thank the good Master from whom they have received it all. But there will be others—alas, a much larger number, whom suffering, and failure, and grief will drive hither to seek for solace at the feet of the "Man of Sorrows." How many stricken souls, in the dark days that are to be, will pour out the sad tale of their distress before this altar, if happily they may find some comfort there for their broken happiness, their broken homes, their broken hearts. Here at least shall one great source of sorrow—the only one, did we but know it—be utterly removed. The misery summed up in the one word, sin, shall here utterly disappear, and in the shadow of that secluded spot where Christ's mercy seat is set up, how many a wounded and world-weary soul shall find rest and peace?

But far above all in our forecast must ever stand that for which this church was primarily raised—the great sacrificial act, the Mass, the center of Catholic worship—the heart from which our reli-

gion draws its life. How many generations of unborn men and women shall gather to take part in the great rite here beneath this roof, and to how many a toiler by flood and field shall the daily message be rung out telling that Christ comes once again, and calls His friends around Him: "Come to Me all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you"—with the Bread that is the pledge of eternal life. And when death is coming on, and you may no longer climb the hill to Me, I will go down from this house you have given Me to yours, to bless and strengthen you for the dark passage of death, and brighten it with the promise of seeing Me in a better land, where mourning and grief shall be no more.

Thoughts like these will rise today to the mind of the reflecting Christian and make the celebration a day of moving memories and genuine emotion.

II

1. But we must remember, dearly beloved, that our concern with the good work that is enacted here today does not end in moving forecast or admiring sympathy.

There are to be learned from the sacred ceremony at which we have assisted, lessons that are solidly practical and conduce to our spiritual wel-

fare. There are merits too to be reaped from it which would be fruitful in grace here and in corresponding reward hereafter. Let me direct your attention to one point, and it is that if you endeavor to understand as far as may be the place a Catholic church holds in the economy of God's providence, its dignity, its sanctity, the leading place it holds in the sanctification of men, the reverence it merits and the immortal hopes it inspires, you will come to appreciate the importance of the duty imposed on you, dear brethren, of seeing that it be provided with everything that its dignity and sanctity require.

There are, to be sure, many claims that a Catholic church has upon our reverence, shall I say, upon our generosity; but there is one which is predominant and supreme, and this only will I put before you today. And I will do so to impress on you the importance of bringing to completion what you have so nobly begun. This claim rests on the fact that it is the house of God.

When Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem, God appeared to him and said: "I have sanctified this place to place My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart shall be here always." Now the very words in which this claim of God are put forward open up before us a train of thought in which the mind itself becomes bewildered. Such thoughts

floated in the mind of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, drawing from him an expression of awe and wonder. "Is it then to be," he said, "that God should indeed dwell upon earth?" "If the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, how much less the house that I have built?" Yes, we cannot fathom the depths of this mystery which overwhelmed even the great mind of Solomon, enriched as it was by all his treasures of infused wisdom.

But still we can clearly trace even on its very surface a strong proof of God's love and mercy to us. He stood in no need of our weak efforts to promote the honor of His name, or to proclaim His glory. He had raised in this vast universe a temple comparable to which the grandest works the mind of man had ever conceived or the hand of man executed, dwindle into insignificance. Worlds unnumbered had sprung into being at His word. A mere touch of His divine finger had clothed them with inexpressible beauty. His providence had ranged them in the most perfect order, and taught them to move in the most beautiful harmony. Throughout the vast extent which they occupy, His divine majesty was ever present, governing, directing every one of them as the special object of His care, from the very atom of matter to those vast spheres which careen through space; from the finest organism in which science could detect life to the highest intel-

lect in the angelic choirs. Still in merciful consideration for our weakness and our wants He has deigned to select dwelling-places among men where they would be brought into more intimate communion with Him, and impressed with a more real sense of His divine presence.

Surely then it was their duty to make those temples which He had selected worthy of His presence, and of His majesty, and of the divine operations which He accomplishes within them. Now He seems Himself to have implanted a deep conviction of this duty in men's hearts even at their very creation. We see it in the ceremony surrounding the simple sacrifices of the law of nature. We see it in the elaborate ceremonies of the Hebrew people, called to mind in the highest expression, at least under the old law, in the gorgeous temple to the raising of which Solomon devoted all the resources of his wonderful wisdom, and untold wealth, and boundless influence—that temple which had become to all ages the symbol of what is most grand, most magnificent and beautiful in the builder's art.

2. This love for God's house has ever been a characteristic of the saints, and hence they spared nothing within their power to add to their grandeur and magnificence. Hence, the many examples of their zeal in those gorgeous cathedrals and churches come down to us from the ages of the

faith, the grandeur of which in conception and execution scarcely anything in modern times can rival. David, the King, "the man after God's own heart," opens his mind to us on this point in the psalm where he says: "I have loved the beauty of Thy house, O Lord, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." Nay, of Jesus Christ Himself, the Man-God, it is said that "the zeal for His Father's house had eaten Him up"; and, hence, we see Him in His anger scourge the profaners of the temple, crying out: "My Father's house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."

And God Himself has set us the pattern of what our churches should be, in the beautiful vision vouchsafed to St. John, where he says: "And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: 'Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God.' "

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

"And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of the kings. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee." (Matt. XI, 7–10.)

I

1. As an introduction to the study of the life and doctrine of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, which the Gospels of the Sundays of the year, beginning with Christmas, put before us, the Church devotes the Gospels of those Sundays, the second, third, and fourth of Advent, to the eulogy and preaching of that extraordinary man whom Providence designed to be His precursor. I shall be in keeping, therefore, with the spirit of the sacred liturgy in considering the career of this man, whose virtues our blessed Lord praises in such unmeasured terms.

2. But what language can adequately describe the grandeur of the life of one who has no other historian than the evangelists, no other panegyrist than Jesus Christ—of one "than whom," we have it from the mouth of Truth itself, "greater hath not arisen of those that are born of women"? That I may convey to you some notion of that greatness, let me at the outset lay down for you this incontrovertible principle—that true sanctity is at one and the same time the work of God and the work of man. It is the work of God, who produces it by His grace; it is the work of man, who achieves it by his fidelity. The greatest saint therefore is he whom God has called to the highest sanctity, and who has corresponded to that vocation by the most perfect fidelity.

Now, what vocation could be higher than that of John the Baptist? and, at the same time, what fidelity greater than his? His vocation was most sublime. All the wonders that have reference to his birth and angelic life proclaim this. Ages beforehand prophets announce his destiny; when the fullness of time is come an archangel foretells his birth; miracles accompany that birth; his sanctification precedes it. Now are not all those wonders so many proofs of an extraordinary vocation? His was without doubt the vocation of a man called by God to a rare and singular sanc-

tity, a sanctity which cannot perhaps be surpassed by any of the children of men. "A greater hath not arisen."

3. How will John correspond to a vocation so remarkable? This the Gospel makes known to us.

But let me first of all tell you that there are two sorts of holiness—that of the saints who lived in innocence, and that of the saints who lived in penitence. Now, John the Baptist unites in himself these two kinds of holiness, by living at one and the same time in the most perfect innocence and in the most austere penitence. He strove during his whole life to preserve his innocence, that precious and delicate flower which the breath of grace gives birth to, and which the breath of sin instantly destroys. In order to preserve it, he quit the world from his tenderest childhood and took refuge in the desert. Secluded caves, sombre retreats, vast solitudes, which were in former times the sojourn of the prophets; these will be the asylum of his innocence, of his virtue; these will be the sole confidants of the secrets of his heart; the sole witnesses of those ardent prayers that he addresses to heaven for the conversion of the unfaithful Jews, for the glory of the Messias, and the reformation of the world. Before echoing to the loud sound of his preaching, the desert will be made familiar with the lifelong accents of his broken sighs and groans.

Ah, my friends, what an example for us in the conduct of St. John! We behold this strong man of Israel seek safety for his virtue in flight from the allurements of the world; and we, alas, born with a weakness only too well known to us by experience, we dare to brave unarmed the temptations of the world, and we fear not to go forward to meet the enemy, who has only to show himself in order to overcome us.

4. But what is the life of St. John in the desert? That life is presented to us by the evangelist in perhaps the sublimest sketch that was ever penned: "And the same John had his garment of camels' hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey." (Matt. III, 4.) Thus are we introduced to the manner of life of the Baptist in the desert. Water bubbling from the rock will be his drink; vile insects, and honey found by chance in the hollows of trees; these will be his nourishment; a coarse garment platted from the cast-off camels' hair, a pale and disfigured countenance, all announce the severity of his penitence; the austerity of his life. But if his exterior is disfigured by austerity, how does not sanctity adorn him within? He unites at one and the same time the merit of innocence and the merit of penitence. These are the two qualities which Jesus Christ commends in the Gospel. "What," he asks the Jews

who had gone to hear John preach, "what went ye out into the desert to see?" Is it a reed shaken with the wind? Is it a man of unsteady and fugitive virtue which sways to the blast of every passion; or is it a man with virtue firm and unbending as the giant palms that canopy the Jordan, towering heavenward? What went ye out into the desert to see? Is it a man clothed in soft garments such as are to be seen in the houses of kings? or is it one wrapped in a garb of austere penitence? What went ye out into the desert to see? Is it a prophet? Aye, more than a prophet! For the prophets had wives and children, houses and lands; but here is one whose manner of life is more angelic than human; more than a prophet by reason of the excellence of his office; for the prophet's function was to announce the coming of the Messias from afar; his, to point his finger to the Man-God and say: "There He is."

II

1. What influence draws that mighty throng of eager men into the barren desert? What tumult disturbs places so long consecrated to solitude and repose? The cities are deserted; the wilderness is peopled as the streets of a crowded city. A new prophet appears and draws to him all Judea. It is

the Precursor. It is the accomplished model of preachers, John the Baptist. Ah, "John was himself a burning and shining lamp"! The fire of zeal is in his heart; the light of grace is in his words; he comes in the spirit and the power of Elias. He possesses all the eloquence and firmness of that prince among the prophets; he knows the world without having any experience of it, because one knows enough of vice when he has in his heart the principle of virtue.

What a divine influence pervades all his acts! He persuades by his example; he terrifies by his threats; he enlightens by his instructions; he edifies by his humility.

"Do penance," he says. His appearance and his actions say the same before him. "Enter on the ways of justice"; and his conduct shows them the way. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." His whole life has been devoted to smoothing the royal path of grace.

Terror marches before him. He knows that fear is a bridle that restrains the heart of man—a spur that urges him on. He is not content therefore with exhorting sinners to penance. He thunders; he frightens. This "burning and shining lamp" which illuminates and warms little ones, becomes for hardened sinners a lightning that terrifies. Observing, therefore, on the outskirts of the ardent throng

of penitents who hung upon his words, some cynical priests and Pharisees, drawn hither by malice and curiosity, John's ardor kindles. "Offspring of vipers," he addresses them, "what brings you here? Who hath taught you to flee from the wrath to come?" Ungrateful serpents, whom the Lord has nourished in His bosom, do you, like your forefathers, dare to raise your heads against Him, even as the progeny of vipers that lacerate the womb that bore them? Tremble for your salvation; the thunder of the Lord mutters; the lightning from heaven is ready to destroy you. Sterile and unfruitful trees, the axe of divine vengeance is ready to strike you. If you bring not forth fruits worthy of penance, you shall be cut down and cast into the fire. The heavenly husbandman is on his barn floor. His winnowing fan is in His hand. He goes to sift His wheat; the good grain He shall store up in the granary of His church; but the chaff, it shall be cast into the flames.

2. "What shall we do then?" say the people, terrified at his words. "What shall we do?"—words befitting true penitents who are touched at the knowledge of their sins, and which indicate a condition of soul ready for the reception of grace—"What shall we do?" It is then that the Baptist enlightens them by his instructions. But will not the direction of a man so austere and mortified be

more terrible and terrifying than his threats? No, my friends, his direction is wise, exact, and practicable. It is wise; because it holds a mean between severity and leniency. It is exact; because it is the Spirit of Truth that he consults. It is practicable; because it is proportioned to the state of those who consult him.

The rich Sadducees consult him. Will he say to them: "Quit your goods; renounce your families; and come with me to weep over your sins in the depths of the desert." No, he merely says: "Give alms, and give it from your superfluity." "Let him who hath two tunics give to him who hath none." He does not say: "Let him who has only one give it away"; that is a counsel of perfection given by Jesus Christ to His elect only. But "let him who has two give away one": that is a precept.

The publicans—those who farmed the taxes—come to consult him. Will he say to them: "Men abhorred by the whole world, vile slaves of avarice, quit a profession which makes you hateful to the whole human race, and come to sanctify yourselves with me in poverty"? No, he simply says: "Forget not the poor; spare the widow and the orphan; spare the blood and tears of the unhappy; and collect the taxes without fraud."

3. Such power displayed in the preaching of our saint, joined to such an example of innocence

and austerity of life, won to John all hearts. Crowds press around him to receive from him the baptism of penance which is the symbol of conversion of heart. Unheard of success accompanies his labors. He is taken for Elias. He is taken for one of the ancient prophets re-arisen. What shall I say? He is taken for the Christ—for the long expected Messias. Will he allow himself to be dazzled by the splendor of his glory? No, my friends; it will only give him a favorable opportunity to edify all by his humility. This virtue you know does not easily accommodate itself to success. Vanity lays hold of all things that glitter, and even the Saints are not free from its assaults.

John the Baptist is humble in his success. When, therefore, many begin to look upon him as the Messias, he suffers them not to regard him even as a prophet. He would even make himself less than man. He says of himself in answer to their inquiries: "I am the voice"—vain thing—"the voice of one crying in the desert."

The Saviour comes to receive baptism at his hands. He humbles Himself. John would think himself happy to receive from Him what He demands. He declares himself "unworthy to loose the latchet of His shoes." He knows that Jesus will efface his glory, and he announces Him. He is the first to point Him out and say: "There He is. . . .

Behold the Lamb of God who cometh to take away the sins of the world. He must increase, but in proportion as His reputation grows, mine must become less. He is the Bridgroom of the Church." "My chief glory is to be the friend of the Bridegroom." "Therefore, do I rejoice with exceeding joy, because of the presence of the Bridegroom, whose voice falls mellow on my ears."

What humility in one so exalted! Ah, John was truly humble, because he saw the truth with clearness. Let us learn from him to esteem the gifts of God at their proper value and not attribute to ourselves what belongs to Him alone.

III

1. A man so powerful in word and work could have no other end than one capable of adding a new lustre to his virtue. After having been an example to all men in the practice of virtue, and the model of preachers by the splendor of his doctrine, John the Baptist will become the prince of martyrs by the heroism of his death.

The world regards as a hero the man who braves death that he may take from other men their liberty or their life, and that he may procure for himself the triumph of ambition. But religion, more enlightened in her views and more just in her judg-

ments, regards as a hero him who sacrifices his liberty and who suffers death to make truth and justice triumph. There is merit in knowing how to discern the truth; there is often courage in uttering it; but it is only a hero that charges himself with the duty of carrying it to the ears of kings. It enters the palace only in fear and trembling. Its voice is there but little known; its figure strange.

Will truth then never enter the palace of the Herods? Yes, it will. It enters with John the Baptist. It does more; it speaks, it storms in the ears of Herod himself.

John has now within the space of one short year moved all Judea. Crowds from every corner of the country from Galilee to Palestine throng the banks of the Jordan to hear the word from him and receive the baptism of penance. The great council of Jerusalem sends deputies to consult him and ask him if he were in truth the Messias. Herod sends messengers to invite him to his palace and to have him preach before him. The king listens to him. He consents even to follow his counsels in everything that is indifferent to him—that cost his inclinations nothing.

This commencement of favors will not last. The saint finds out that Herod keeps scandalous commerce with his brother's wife. He cannot keep silence. His zeal is kindled. He is no longer the voice

of one crying in the desert. He comes to cry in the midst of the court. He thunders in the ear of the king the bold and troublesome word: "*Non licet.* It is not permitted; it is not permitted," he says.

The courtiers blame him. Herod is enraged at him. Herodias detests him. He is put in chains. What a spectacle! John in prison; Herod on a throne! Innocence oppressed; vice triumphant! It is the will of God, who ever perfects the virtue of His servants by giving them a trait of resemblance to the Crucified Lord, whose life they strive to copy.

John is tranquil in his misfortunes. He suffers for truth, and truth consoles him. Herod may take from him his liberty, but it is not in his power to weaken his courage or to tarnish his virtue. They "go down with him into the pit, and in bonds they leave him not." His zeal for his Divine Master forsakes him not in prison. Some of his disciples are allowed to see him. He sends them to Jesus to ask him: "Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" Was it that the Baptist was in doubt concerning the person of Jesus Christ? No, but he would have those disciples who were prejudiced against the Saviour see His works, that thus they might be drawn after Him. And it was on this occasion that our Blessed Lord pronounced that magnificent eulogy on the Baptist which is unique in

the Gospels, and where He exalts him above the prophets and the most renowned that the earth had seen.

2. The illustrious defender of truth lies in prison; but God prepares for him a still more terrible trial. He has passed a part of his life in the Apostolate of Jesus Christ; He must end that life by martyrdom.

Herod, famous for the pageantry of his court, gives a sumptuous banquet on his birthday. At this banquet Herodias could not fail to be the ornament. She causes her daughter Salomé to execute in the presence of the king one of those wanton Greek dances lately introduced into the court. The licentious heart of Herod is smitten with the grace and charms of the girl, and in the drunkenness of his passion he swears to give her whatsoever she should ask, were it even half of his kingdom. Herodias seizes the moment to satisfy her vengeance against the declared enemy of her disorders. She inspires her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist. The king is sorry at his imprudence. He sees now, when too late, the snare that was set for him. He is ashamed of his weakness. He knows that the blood of the just unjustly shed will tarnish his crown. But love blinds him; and, as we know, that softest of the passions often becomes the most cruel. He orders the death of the Baptist. "The holi-

est of the children of men," the most enlightened of the prophets, the most zealous of the apostles, falls under the sword of the executioner, the victim of truth, of the purest charity, of the most intrepid zeal.

3. My brethren, the story of the Baptist's life is ended. He did not live in vain. No, as long as the word of truth shall last, his virtues will be "a burning and shining lamp" to direct the hearts of men to holiness. His preaching will prepare their souls by penance for the reception of the Saviour. The memory of his death will nerve the just to emulate his zeal and to despise life for the cause of justice and truth.

Let us accompany in spirit those penitent crowds that throng the banks of the Jordan. Let the voice of his preaching find an echo in our souls. Let us cleanse ourselves by a baptism of tears. Thus will the Baptist direct us too to prepare the way for Christ to the royal city of our hearts; that at the coming Christmas we may have the happiness of entertaining the Messias, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who cometh to take away the sins of the world.

ST. PAUL

"And the Lord said to him (Ananias): Go thy way, for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (*Acts IX, 15.*)

THE SECTARY

I

1. Ordinarily, when the Church institutes a feast in honor of a saint, that feast is celebrated on the anniversary of the day when, having put aside the trappings of this mortal life of misery and tears, he enters on the possession of a new and immortal life with God. But there are two feasts in the Church's calendar that are remarkable in this, that they are instituted to commemorate the conversion of the saints in whose honor they are dedicated. One of these is the feast of the conversion of St. Augustine, the great Bishop of Hippo, in Africa; the other, the feast which we celebrate today, of the conversion of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, the circumstances surrounding which I have read for you from the Acts of the Apostles.

In the one, we are shown a man whose early life, blighted by heresy and sin, is changed, only to become the most contrite and edifying of penitents, and for all time one of the most brilliant lights in the firmament of the Church. In the other, we behold the fierce persecutor of the faithful changed into the most intrepid champion of the Church's faith; a man who, to use the words of Jesus Christ, was to be made a chosen instrument of God to carry the knowledge of His name "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel."

2. And now, dearly beloved, the present seems a fitting occasion to consider briefly the life-story of this wonderful man, whose work looms so large in the early history of the Church, and whom all generations unite in looking upon as the chief moulder of her doctrine.

A Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, the son of parents who lived in the strictest observance of the law of Moses, Paul (or Saul, as he was then called) spent his childhood and early youth in Tarsus of Cilicia, a city which in those times shared with Athens and Alexandria the reputation of being one of the three most cultured cities of the world. But gifted as was our Saint with the rarest intellectual endowments, and many as were the worldly advantages to be derived from the acquirement of Greek learning, the mind of the boy turned instinctively

from the study of the philosophy of Greece to the cultivation of a knowledge of the law of Israel.

As his parents had decided that he was to be a rabbi, that is to say, an interpreter of the Sacred Books, and a pleader before the courts of Israel, when he was grown to boyhood, he was sent up to Jerusalem to study in one of the higher schools of Jewry. Whether guided by family counsels or consulting his own tastes, we know not, he betook himself to the school of Gamaliel to pursue his studies. This master, one of the seven whom the Jews honored with the title of Raban, stood at the head of a great school, noted for the high character of its teaching. This Gamaliel, the grandson of the great Hillel, who taught about the time our Lord was born in Bethlehem, and, as some would have it, was a son of that Simeon, the president of the Sanhedrin, who ministered when Mary and Joseph presented the Child Jesus in the Temple, exercised a great and noble influence on the young doctors of Jerusalem. He was the upholder of a liberal interpretation of the law, as opposed to the more rigid teaching of his rival, Shammai, and his only thought was to reconcile all mankind to the law and to extend the kingdom of Jehovah over the whole earth. Hence we are not surprised to find him forbearing towards the Christians, or at seeing him extend the influence

of his great name to protect the Apostles when his associates on the great council of the Sanhedrin contemplated putting them to death.

"Here, sitting in the dust, at the feet of the wise man," Saul, as he himself tells us, "drank eagerly of his word." And with such effect that, as he continues, "in Judaism he made greater progress than any of his companions of the same age."

3. But in spite of all the precepts of his master counselling mildness and toleration, nothing could restrain the ardor of the fiery young scribe, who would brook no deviation from what he considered the strict observance of the law. It was this fierce, overmastering temper that made him, later on, throw himself heart and soul into the persecution raised by the Jews of Jerusalem against the early Christians. It was this that carried him to take a chief part in the trial and murder of St. Stephen, the protagonist of ecclesiastical liberty, and the protomartyr of the Church. And now, having filled the Christians of Jerusalem with the terror of his name, he goes to the high priest, Ananas, the son of that Annas who crucified our Lord, and obtains from him letters to the chiefs of the synagogues at Damascus empowering him to seek out and bring in chains to Jerusalem all the Christians whom he might find in that city.

4. He sets out, accompanied by a retinue of

followers, "breathing," as the Scripture says, "threats and slaughter against the faithful." With eagerness he passes over that strange, rock-strewn country of Iturea, which separates Judea from Syria, and enters on the lovely valley of Damascus —a land set with orchards and gardens, and watered by the many-flowing streams of the Abana —a region so beautiful then as now, as to be compared, in the poetic language of the East, to a "handful of seed pearls on an emerald carpet."

Sitting on his charger, his mind occupied with the thought of the glory that awaited him, and of the grand reception he was to get from his co-religionists of Damascus, "when now the sun was midway in the heavens, a light from above beyond the brightness of the sun shined round about him," and he was felled to the ground by some unseen power. While thus stunned and fearing, he heard a voice saying to him in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me?" "Who art Thou, Lord?" he answered. And the Lord said: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Thereupon, trembling and terrified, he cried out: "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" Then he is given the instructions I have read for you as to his future conduct.

Thus ends the first part of the career of our

Saint, where we see him, no longer the brilliant young student who so distinguished himself in the school of Gamaliel; no longer the fierce sectary breathing threats and slaughter against the followers of Christ; but the humbled, penitent neophyte, spending his days and nights in prayer and receiving instruction in Christian doctrine from one of the priests of God's Church, the holy old man, Ananias.

II

THE APOSTLE

1. Now we are not to understand, dearly beloved, that this persecutor of the Church, struck down by Jesus Christ in the midst of his work of persecution, rises up to begin all at once his mission of Apostle. Oh, no; he must first retire into the desert to purify his soul by prayer and penance. He must commune for long years with God in solitude. He must, "as one born out of time," who had never seen the Saviour face to face, receive special instruction from Heaven, and the whole body of celestial doctrine must be unfolded to him, even as it was to the others. He must frequent the holy mount, formerly the refuge of Moses and Elias, there to be lifted up in vision, and to get a glimpse

of things divine which "it is not given to the tongue of man to utter." He must receive from the pastors of the Church "the laying on of hands" which was to raise him to the episcopal dignity. He must go up to Jerusalem to see the chiefs of the Apostles, and be recognized by them as an associate. And, finally, he must be chosen by the Holy Spirit for the work of the Apostolate.

Now it might be asked: why all these years of study and prayer; why all this preparation? Why all this loss of valuable time in one who is no longer young, when, to the eye of the outer man, the fields seemed already white for the harvest?

Well, dearly beloved, to judge aright of this, we must consider beyond all the sublime mission of the Apostle. For an Apostle is one called to fulfill the highest dignity and office on earth, and with the dignity, to attain the sublimest holiness ever arrived at by mortal. St. Thomas Aquinas, speaking on this subject, says that "it is temerity to compare other saints to the Apostles, in grace or glory"; that "they were confirmed in grace" even as was the Blessed Mother of God; that "their every movement and every action was according to the promptings of the Holy Ghost"; that "they were instructed immediately by the Divine Word, inasmuch as He spoke to them in a human manner," whence also "they possessed all knowledge

that was expedient for the conversion of the world." Moreover, "their teaching is to form the deposit of the Church's doctrine," and finally, "they are the spiritual fathers of the faithful of all climes and of all generations." Such the dignity and such the holiness to which Paul is called. And thus prepared, and thus equipped, he goes back to his native city of Tarsus, there to await the summons of the Holy Spirit to take up the work of the Apostolate.

2. Time does not permit me to go into the details of those apostolic labors that fill up the remaining years of his life. Let me only say that there is scarcely a nation bordering on the Mediterranean, whether in Europe or Western Asia, that did not hear the voice of his pleading. And though the remembrance of his past sins caused him to look upon himself as the least of the Apostles, and on account of such he considered himself as unworthy to have shared in the society and friendship of Jesus Christ, yet could he say with truth that he labored more than all the other Apostles in the spread of the Gospel.

And if, indeed, with the help of map and Testament, we follow him in his Apostolic journeys, from Antioch to Cyprus, and thence on through the countries of Pamphilia, and Pisidia, and Lycaonia, and back again after five years to Antioch and

Jerusalem; and thence again on a second journey through the whole continent of Asia Minor, including Phrygia, Galatia, and the Ionian cities of the Troad, and thence on through Macedonia and Thessaly to Athens and Corinth; and again on a third missionary journey through these same countries, taking in Lydia and Illyria, till his return by Ephesus and Miletus on a third visit to Jerusalem, where he is taken prisoner and kept four years in chains; and if, after his release in Rome, we trace his wanderings in Spain, Greece, and Italy, where he is captured and condemned to death; does he not appear like another Alexander, to whom the world was too small to satisfy the cravings of his Apostolic zeal?

III

THE MAN OF MANY PARTS

1. And now, dearly beloved, in considering the career of the Saints, if we would gain a thorough knowledge of their lives, we must study the gifts of mind and heart they were possessed of, and the motives that actuated them in the prosecution of their work. What, then, were the gifts of our Saint, and what the motives that influenced him in his phenomenal labors for the spread of the

Gospel? Well, dearly beloved, those gifts, varied and catholic in their extent, may chiefly be reduced to three: viz., science, fortitude, and love.

And, first of all, science. A man of more than ordinary intelligence, one of the geniuses of history, Paul had great advantages for the perfecting of his mental capabilities. We have seen him in early life go up to Jerusalem from the cultured city of Tarsus, there, under the tutorship of the greatest teacher of Jewry, to perfect himself in the study of the Law. And so great were his abilities, so assiduous was he in the prosecution of his studies during the years that he sat at Gamaliel's feet, that he tells us he "made greater progress than any of his companions of the same age." As a scribe, and even anterior to his conversion, his learning and his genius gave him a position of eminence in the synagogues of Jerusalem. And in after times it was his superiority over all his competitors in disputation in the synagogues that brought on him frequent persecution and perils of violence and death.

And hence it was that God, who is wont to make use of the natural endowments of a man for the carrying out of His will, employed the natural gifts of St. Paul to formulate that great body of doctrine which was to be for all time the deposit of the Church's faith. "He shall be a vessel of election

to carry My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel." And, indeed, so ample is the deposit of religious truth contained in the writings of our Saint; so deeply did he drink from the fount of supernatural knowledge; so profound, so scientific, and so universal is the doctrine contained in those fourteen Epistles which he gave to the Church, that even if all the other Scriptures were destroyed, not much that is essential would be wanting to the Church's doctrines.

2. But if science perfects the mind, there is another quality that perfects the will, and that is fortitude. This is a gift of the Holy Spirit to man to enable him to face all trials, and to sustain all labors and sufferings in the cause of good. The man endowed with the supernatural gift of fortitude is by it strengthened so as to overcome all obstacles that prevent him from fulfilling the perfect will of God. Those obstacles are of a twofold nature, those that are within us, in our own heart, and those that we meet exteriorly. As to our Saint, we see him so face and overcome all the obstacles of the former class, that he who was before his conversion the fierce persecutor of the people of God, the obstinate, self-willed Jewish sectary, who "kicked against the goad" of remorse that pricked his conscience, as he tried the most violent means to reestablish the worn-out forms of Jewish worship, be-

come so pliant to grace that he could say with truth: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

And as to the trials coming from without, the bare enumeration of them as they are given in his writings is enough to fill us with admiration of the man who could bear so much, and overcome so much, for the upholding of a principle. Speaking of these trials, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he says: "I was in many more labors than they," *i. e.*, the false teachers who opposed him, "in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I was in the midst of the sea. In journeyings, often; in perils of water; in perils of robbers; in perils from the Gentiles; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in perils from false brethren. In labor and painfulness; in much watching; in hunger and thirst; in fastings, often; in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, my daily insistence and solicitude for all the churches."

3. But if great was the fortitude of our Saint in bearing trials for the spread of the Gospel; if great, and deep, and full was the science of divine things possessed by him, a science that he placed at the foot of the Cross, as when he says: "I know

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nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; these qualities are eclipsed and sublimated by his love. The love of St. Paul had a twofold object, God and man. As to his love for God, we get a glimpse of its intensity now and again in his writings; *e. g.*, in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation; or distress; or famine; or nakedness; or danger; or persecution; or the sword? But in all things we overcome because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

This love that he bore for his Divine Master filled him with grief at the thought of the persecutions he had waged against the Christians of Jerusalem—a persecution with which he reproaches himself many times in his Epistles, and which made him look upon himself as unworthy of the high vocation of the Apostolate: "Lord, Thou knowest that I cast into prison and beat in every synagogue those that believed in Thee; and when the blood of Stephen, Thy witness, was shed, I stood by and consented, and kept the garments of them that stoned him"; while, on the other hand, it carried him to share as largely as poor human

nature was able in the suffering life of Jesus Christ. This we see in the many outbursts of love and desire with which his writings are filled. "God forbid that I should glory in anything save the cross of my Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." "From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ on my body"—the marks he received in the many whippings and bruises suffered in the course of his Apostolate.

4. As to his love for his fellow men, it was the secret of all his trials, as it was of all his successes as an Apostle. No man ever loved as did the great Apostle; and no man was ever loved by his followers as he.

The charity of St. Paul was not of the kind seen in other saints, whose natural love for their fellow-beings seemed to be absorbed in the supernatural. The charity of the great Apostle was to the last a charity in which the human traits are visible side by side with the supernatural, even as the waters of two great rivers which, joining their stream in a mighty flood, seem to flow side by side throughout their course to the ocean. Hence we see his broad-souled sympathy extend itself to every phase of human joy and sorrow. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on

fire? To the Jews, I became a Jew; that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law, as if I were under the law; that I might gain them that are under the law. To those that were without the law, as if I were without the law; that I might gain them that were without the law. To the weak, I became weak; that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men; that I might save all."

Hence we see those affectionate greetings he appends to all his letters to the many acquaintances he had met in the course of his Apostolate. And that affection for all men was fully reciprocated by the Christians for whom he labored. Hence we see them cling to him, make sacrifices for his sake, and shield him when possible from the attacks of his enemies.

And who is not moved at reading the account of that last affecting scene that took place at Ephesus, where the faithful and the clergy, with tears and lamentations, "throw themselves on his neck and kiss him, being grieved most of all for the word that he now said, that they should see his face no more." Nay, this love for his dear neophytes and his desire for their spiritual well-being moderated in him the desire that he had for the enjoyment of the divine presence; for he speaks of himself as "straightened between two things—having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing far the

better; but to abide in the flesh is needful for you." And even when he looks forward to the "crown of justice" in store for him, he associates the joys of Heaven with the presence of his converts. "What is our hope, our joy, our crown of glory? Are you not, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at His coming? For you are our glory and our joy."

This sympathetic love for all men, this love of God that burned in his heart, this intrepid zeal that overbore all obstacles, it was that bore him on from country to country, till, at the end of the twenty-five years of his Apostolate, he sees a large part of the countries of Europe and Western Asia, the very center of the civilization and commercial life of the world, evangelized by his labors. Syria, Pamphylia, Lydia, Galatia, Ionia, Macedonia, Thessaly, Illyria, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and Spain —he traveled through them all, most of them several times. In each and all he won to the knowledge of the religion of Christ large communities of men and women. In each and all he ordered a liturgy and laws, and organized a hierarchy to look after their future well-being. And to the existence of those communities we are indebted for those glorious Epistles which he left as a legacy to the Church, to be for all time the chief repository of her doctrine.

IV

HIS MARTYRDOM

1. And now, after twenty-five years of labor in the Apostolate, five of which he passed in chains, the great Apostle comes to die. It was becoming that he who had labored so strenuously in the cause of the Faith, who had been its standard bearer in so many lands, who had edified the whole Church by the splendor of his virtues, and had enlightened her by his teaching, should end his life by martyrdom. It was in the time of the first general persecution—that of the Emperor Nero. This monster, who now ruled at Rome, having brought suspicion on himself of being the instigator of the burning of the city, tried to turn the odium of the deed from himself against the Christians. With this object he, first of all, had rumors spread among the people that they, as enemies of the gods, had tried to enwrap the whole empire in conflagration, and then gave orders that they were everywhere to be set upon and butchered. He encouraged the atrocities that were being practised on them by himself having them seized and put to death. Numbers were slaughtered by the sword or thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheaters. Others, he had clothed

in sheepskins, to be worried by dogs and wolves. Others again, he had enveloped in tar and pitch, and set up as torches to light up the imperial gardens, while he himself, dressed as a charioteer, drove round to witness their sufferings.

The chiefs of the Apostles, who were then absent, hastened back to Rome to comfort and encourage their followers. Their presence in the city could not long be concealed. They were apprehended, condemned, and executed; the one, by crucifixion, on the ground where stands today the palace of the Vatican; and he was buried on the spot over which, in after times, was raised the noblest temple that was ever erected to the honor of the true God; the other, enjoying the privilege of Roman citizenship inherited from his ancestors, could not be punished as a slave. He was taken without the walls and there beheaded.

2. One word more, and I have done. The ceremony that we take part in here today reminds us that St. Paul's name and labors have not been forgotten. And when eighteen centuries later a young Order should arise in the Church, amid manners very different to those that obtained in his time, and in a land far away beyond the Western ocean —a country unknown to and unthought of by the peoples among whom the great Apostle labored; the founders of that Order, when choosing a patron

and a model on whose ideals to order their lives, could find no one among the saints more fitting to outline the objects they had in view than the great Apostle whose life we have been considering.

They, too, laid themselves out to be Apostles. And, as long ago the Saviour of the world chose the stricken Saul "to be a vessel of election to carry His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel"; so now, in the beginning of this twentieth century, we behold in our own land a body of Apostolic men, holy, learned, filled with zeal, devote themselves to the preaching of the Faith of Jesus Christ, not only to the Catholic people of this great country, the true Israel of God, but also to those outside the pale of the Church, to those dear ones in Christ who seemed hitherto to be left unthought of.

This noble consecration of their lives, and this grand success of their labors give hope that in time greater successes will be achieved, and that multitudes of upright, unprejudiced non-Catholics in this great country will be brought into the bosom of Holy Mother, the Church.

That it may be so, and that God may pour out abundant blessings on the members of the Order, we sincerely pray. And as in the case of their great patron, no sea however boisterous, no mountain barrier however high, no opposition however fierce,

could stay his onward march as he bore the tidings of salvation from country to country; so may we have the happiness of seeing this vigorous young Order grow in strength and power till it spread the influence of its noble life from ocean to ocean; and while nourishing the faithful with the food of sound doctrine, may it lead those who are without, our dear separated brethren, to the portals of the Church, their mother, that Church in which alone is found true life, and knowledge, and salvation.

ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN [1]

I

HIS PRODIGIOUS LEARNING

1. We celebrate during the course of the year the feasts of many saints of the Dominican family, of men and women who in their day shed luster on the Church by the splendor of their virtues and achievements. The names of several will at once rise to your lips: Catherine, Raymond, Vincent, Peter, Pius, Agnes, and others.

But today we commemorate the memory of one more illustrious than all these, of one who, by the splendor of his genius and by his phenomenal learning and holiness, has gained a unique position in the Catholic world, and who is recognized by all as the interpreter *par excellence* of the Church's doctrine. This is he of whom not only the Dominican Order but the whole Church is so justly proud, the incomparable Doctor, St. Thomas of Aquin.

[1] Adapted from Père Monsabré.

Born in the little city of Aquino, in the kingdom of Naples, under the beautiful sky of southern Italy, our saint was from his earliest years to give promise of the fulfillment of the prophecy made by a holy hermit to his mother before his birth, that she should have a son so celebrated for his learning and holiness that the world should never again see his equal.

But which of these qualities shall I develop for you, dearly beloved; for both are esesntial in one whom the Church venerates in the double capacity of doctor and saint—the astonishing extent of his learning or the virtues of his angelic life?

To say that St. Thomas was a genius of the highest order, a man gifted with an angelic intellect, one in whom nature and grace combined to produce a prodigy, is but to repeat what has been said by the most illustrious popes and scholars since his time. "He is called Thomas," say his contemporaries, "that is to say, abyss." And an abyss his mind truly was, as seen reflected in his glorious works, the vastness and profundity of which no one has yet been able fully to explore. To a vast and faithful memory, which retained forever what he had once read, he joined an extraordinary power of reflection, which enabled him to concentrate his thoughts continually on the most sublime objects.

This power of concentrated thought, together with his silence and modesty, gained from him, while a student in the university of Cologne, the nickname of "the great dumb ox of Sicily"; and many were the expressions of sympathy on the part of his fellow students for one whom they considered of mediocre talents; till, on a great occasion, his genius is revealed, and his master, Blessed Albert the Great, himself perhaps the greatest Doctor of that age, famous in history for the number and greatness of its scholars, seeing his own light eclipsed in Thomas's superior light, cried out prophetically: "We call brother Thomas 'the dumb ox of Sicily.' I tell you, my friends, this ox will one day put forth such bellowings as shall be heard even to the extremities of the world."

2. And the world has, indeed, heard St. Thomas, and has saluted him as her greatest representative of human learning; even as the Church has saluted him as the champion of her teachings, and the greatest of her Doctors. There is no branch of science, human or divine, that has not been enriched and illustrated from the copious fountain of his intellect, which poured forth thoughts and principles broad and deep in an impetuous flood. Prompt to conceive and fertile to give birth to profound and sublime thoughts, he

arranged them with the ability of a master and he had such a command over himself that it is said he could dictate to four secretaries on different subjects at the same time. Theology, philosophy, the interpretation of books sacred and profane, history, political economy, poetry,—he has treated all with the splendor of an incomparable genius. It would be an endless task even to make an enumeration of his works. Suffice it to say that, as the result of the contracted period of one short life, he has left to the Church a legacy which makes the boast of all the learned churchmen since his time to be able fully to understand and to interpret clearly.

This power of our holy Doctor is acknowledged even by the Church's enemies, and it was an arrogant boast of the heresiarch Bucer, perhaps the most learned of the leaders of the so-called "Reformation," "Take away Thomas of Aquin, and I will destroy the Church." True it is that the Church, being divine and indefectible, stands in need of no human help for its preservation; but this boast of one of the great enemies of the Church shows us the position which, under God, St. Thomas holds in regard to our holy religion.

But not to weary you with the relation of his

triumphs in the field of learning, let me here give a few of the testimonies of those most competent to judge, and say with a long list of Sovereign Pontiffs who commend the study of his works, that his doctrine is "sure," "true," "eminent beyond all others," "miraculous," "divine," that "he holds the scepter in the empire of learning," and conclude with the glorious testimony of the late illustrious Pope Leo XIII, who says in a famous encyclical: "The Angelic Doctor fills the earth with the glory of his doctrine." "Reason," he continues, "lifted on his angelic pinions can scarcely soar higher, and faith can scarcely hope from reason helps more numerous and more powerful than those which it receives from Thomas of Aquin."

Can I add anything to this testimony, dearly beloved? Yes, I can, and a day of unsurpassed glory will arrive for our saint when, in the midst of the assembly of the pastors of the Church in the most celebrated of her General Councils, two books are placed side by side on a throne of state, and the Fathers of Trent salute them as the depositories of the Church's doctrine, and the fountains of her teaching; and those books are: a copy of the holy Bible and the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas.

II

HIS WONDERFUL HOLINESS

1. But perhaps I am insisting too much on his triumphs as a teacher. Let me turn aside awhile to edify you by the recital of his virtues. Learning has, indeed, its advantages, but it has also its disadvantages, and I very much doubt whether, in our nature, unbalanced and put out of its equilibrium by sin, the disadvantages in this matter do not carry the day.

Without doubt learning perfects the human soul, can conduct it to God, and aid it in virtue; but, still, we must be on our guard against passion which leads it astray and corrupts it. It is the property of holiness to combat this passion and to confine learning within just bounds and preserve it from an unhealthy flatulency. For, "knowledge puffeth up," the Apostle says, and this is the first and commonest of its inconveniences. Souls modest by temperament are rare, and, as a rule, of no great merit. The greater number of the learned can subscribe to the examination of conscience of the great Plato: "We love to glorify ourselves and pride ourselves upon what we know."

And I want you to remember well, my brethren, that they are not the minds most richly endowed

who usually draw after them the greatest train of worldly consequence and make the greatest noise in the world. No; they are as a rule men and women of mediocre talents who, if I may so describe it, make their flatulent swelling of a wordy knowledge pass for the solid fat of true greatness.

2. "Knowledge puffeth up." St. Thomas knew this sentence of the Apostle well, and meditated on it till he filled his soul with a salutary terror of it. Hence it was that, whilst a student, he concealed with such discreet modesty the sublime and profound ideas that he felt maturing in his beautiful intellect. And when it was no longer possible to hide the light; when, attracted by its splendor, glory marched before him, he wished to envelope it in shadow. He made himself so little, so amiable, simple, and serviceable to all, that one knows not which to admire the more in him—the splendor of his genius or the depth of his humility.

With what joy in the bitter quarrels of the University of Paris, hostile to the teachings of the Mendicant Orders, did he not accept injury, hard treatment, and public humiliation? With what docility did he not permit himself to be reproved before all his brethren for alleged faults in grammar and pronunciation, even when he spoke correctly? With what amiable complacency did he not set himself to perform humble services that

were asked of him in the name of obedience? And in this connection it is told of him how, when once a strange brother was sent out to beg, he was directed by the prior to take with him for companion the first friar he should meet. This happened to be Thomas. And though he could have excused himself on the plea that he was not contemplated in the command of the superior, yet he went on the instant as the brother's companion. And for the greater part of the day, to the edification of all, the great Doctor was seen puffing and limping through the streets, for he was a fat man, and occasionally receiving sharp reprimands from his younger and more active companion for his slowness of movement. When at last the brother came to know who was his companion, he humbly apologized for his rudeness, only to be the more edified by the humble Thomas, who replied in words that have become an aphorism: "Obedience is the perfection of religious life."

Knowledge puffeth up, and one of the consequences of this unhealthy flatulency is the blind infatuation which cannot recognize or bear any superior, and revolts against contradiction.

Another is the ambition of honors. It would seem that all positions are due to him who by study and the development of his intellect has raised himself above the herd of the uncultured.

He cannot content himself with a vague esteem, or a sterile applause of his admirers. He wants titles, distinctions. Give him something. He wants more, and will not be able to prevent the scandalous explosion of his discontent, if haste is not made to satisfy him. Hence, so many scandals in Church and State, where once eminent men being disappointed in the object of their desires, descend to the abyss of treachery and apostasy. And even when this ambition for honors and distinctions is not carried to the last excess, how many miserable quarrels and sordid jealousies does it engender all enemies of holiness!

The humble Thomas, although he held the scepter of learning in the intellectual world, demanded only to be eclipsed, and in order to put in evidence his knowledge and genius, it was necessary that obedience and charity should make of it for him a duty. Nay, so far was he from desiring or canvassing for distinctions, that, as he himself avows, he never in his life felt even the slightest emotion of vainglory. "O grace divine," cries out the Church in her liturgy, "grace divine which surpasses every prodigy; he was always sheltered from the poisoned shafts of pride." He detested honors; and yet he was obliged to bear all his life the persecution of them.

3. There is a third inconvenience attached to

knowledge, or, rather, that one encounters in the effort to attain it. It is one against which those who give themselves to study cannot be too much on their guard. And it is this: that knowledge, whilst it perfects the intellect, leaves the will untouched. And it is a common reproach of learning that, whilst it enlightens the mind, it dries up the heart. Hence it is sometimes styled a light without warmth; and is compared to the arctic sun, which, however brilliantly it may illuminate the surface of the earth, fails to melt the icy covering that envelopes it, and to unbosom it to life and vegetation.

Such could not be said of the learning of St. Thomas. He loved to repeat with the Apostle: "Did I know all mysteries and possess all knowledge, without love I am nothing." That heart of his, great in its affections, as his mind was fertile in sublime thoughts, became early possessed of the love of God. And this charity, becoming intensified with his growth in years, gave birth to those tender effusions of divine love, to that intoxication of tears when he celebrated the holy mysteries, and was the source of those sublime hymns and canticles which he inserted in the lovely Office and Mass of the Blessed Sacrament composed by him, and which we chant during Benediction and whenever the Most Holy Sacrament is solemnly

adored. In his scientific meditations he had caught a glimpse of the greatness of God, and his heart melted with love at seeing Him so little between his hands during the celebration of Mass—a contrast the thought of which frequently threw him into an ecstasy.

Not only did Thomas love God even to the extent of swooning away with the overpowering mastery of his affections, but when he descended from the sacred heights to which his love had carried him, he showed himself so full of charms to all, so radiant with sweetness, that no one could see him without being carried away with love for him. Crowds waited for him, if only to see him in the streets as he passed along. They threw themselves in his presence to enjoy the happiness of looking at him. A single glance from his eye entering into the soul carried with it consolation, peace, and joy.

4. There is another virtue that shone in him with peculiar brilliancy, and that won for him a title more glorious than that which attached to his vast learning and sublime doctrine—I mean the virtue of chastity. This virtue merited for him to be styled, whilst yet young in life, "the Angel of the Schools," and among the illustrious of the Church's roll call he has borne in all time the noble title of "the Angelic Doctor."

His love for this virtue was shown in a very striking manner in the heroic struggle he was obliged to undergo to carry out his resolution of entering the Dominican Order. Being a member of the noble house of Aquino, and a grand-nephew of the emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, his relatives thought it beneath them that a scion of their house should disgrace them by becoming a member of a Mendicant Order. These relatives understood not that God is master of vocations, and they spared nothing to turn him from his humble and generous design.

But nothing could shake his resolution,—neither their subtle reasonings nor the prospective greatness they dangled before his eyes; nor the somber picture of humiliation and suffering which they said awaited him in a Mendicant Order; nor the high influences that were put to work to stagger him in his resolution; nor the tears of his mother; nor the caresses of his sisters. The prison itself only gave him leisure for prayer and labor.

It was then that the last proof was tried, and it was worthy of the two soldiers who had conceived it. A shameless woman is bribed to tempt the virtue of their brother. But then it was that the angelic young man thought that the time had come to cease to be sweet and patient if he would

not cease to be pure. Arming himself with a burning brand, he put to flight the impious woman whose audacity had up to this obtained easy victory. And as a reward of this last triumph God permitted him to fall into an ecstatic slumber, during which angels descended and bound his loins with a mystic girdle, as if to protect with an inviolable rampart the chaste sanctuary in which Divine Wisdom was to work such marvels.[1]

5. No one was more free from the slavery of the senses. He was so mortified that he lived as one without a body, not knowing what to eat, or whether he had eaten, or even when he ought to eat, so that it was necessary that a brother should be told off to remind him that it was necessary to nourish himself sometimes, to preserve his life. He dreamt only of nourishing his soul by meditation, and of laboring in the glorious work of his apostolate. And even whilst at table, when all others thought only of the food that nourishes the body, Thomas, at the contemplation of the Supersubstantial Food prepared for our souls by Jesus Christ, was often wrapt in ecstasy.

[1] This girdle, still fresh and limber as on the day when it was carried down from Heaven, is preserved in the Dominican monastery of Chieri, in Italy, and, according to the testimony of scientists who have tested it, it is made of a material different from any of which they have had experience.

III

HIS INTELLECTUAL TRIUMPHS

1. It is related of him how once, when dining with the good St. Louis, King of France, while all the company around were bandying courtly compliments and quaffing toasts to the welfare of their king and country, the mind of Thomas advanced far into the field of controversy. Michael-like, among the hosts of God alone he championed the Church's doctrine and challenged the most formidable of her enemies. Armed with the sword of the spirit, he slashed right and left; he hewed down; he cut through; he overturned the basis of their errors; and while absorbed in the possession of his triumphant argument, he was guilty of an indiscretion which has become historic. For, forgetful of the royal presence, forgetful of the distinguished company around him, to the astonishment of all, down came his hand with a tremendous bounce upon the table, whilst he exclaimed: "This day I have finished with the Manicheans."

The discomfiture of this formidable heresy was but one of the triumphs of his career, and before the end of his successful life he had finished with all the enemies of the Church. He confounded all.

He overthrew all, either actually, or by anticipation. Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Mahometans, Manicheans, detractors of monastic Orders and of the religious life; he confounded all. And Protestantism itself, though it raised its head only nigh on three hundred years after his blessed death, was checked in its devastating career by the arguments drawn from his incomparable works; and this is the secret of the bitterness with which he has been assailed by the leaders of the "Reformation" and by the heretical writers of this as well as of preceding centuries.

2. What more shall I say? In the midst of the stupendous labors of his doctorate he found time to exercise a most laborious apostolate. He was consulted from all parts. Popes, bishops, kings, princes, sent delegates to ask of him light and guidance. Theologians and universities brought to him the most difficult questions to have them solved. To all he replied, often by long letters and pamphlets. He taught in all the great schools of Europe: Paris, Rome, Bologna, Naples; in all the cities where the papal court sojourned; at Viterbo, Orvieto, Fondi, Perugia. From the school he passed to the pulpit to preach to the people. And it was in the midst of a life such as this that he found time to write admirable commentaries, and to build prodigious monuments of science, in the midst of

which rears itself in proud triumph his *Summa Theologica.*

3. His call to Heaven is heard before he finishes his last work, and then he ceases to write and closes his books to look no longer but on God. Contemplation and ecstasy had become a habit of his life, even to the day when God heard the desire he expressed at the end of one of his hymns and raised the veil that covered His adorable face and made him happy in the contemplation of His glory.

It was on the 7th of March, 1274, some hours before dawn, that the Angelic Doctor expired sweetly in the arms of the monks of the abbey of Fossa-Nuova. At the news of his death the Christian world is moved, and there is heard in the Dominican Order, in all the schools, and even in the papal court, the cry of universal regret, "Our light is extinguished, our sun has disappeared."

4. My brethren, I have done. It remains for me only to add a few words to tell of the honors conferred on him after his blessed departure. He was canonized in the year 1323, and during the centuries that have elapsed, his reputation as *the* teacher by eminence in the Church has grown from year to year, till that crowning day, some fifty years ago, when the late Pope Leo XIII, of blessed memory, declared him the patron of all Catholic colleges and schools.

Some three-quarters of a century after his death his relics were by the command of the Sovereign Pontiff, Urban V, removed from the cloisters of Fossa-Nuova to the Dominican Convent at Toulouse. This translation, the feast of which we celebrate on the twenty-eighth of January, was the occasion of one of the proudest pageants in the history of the Church. And as the blessed remains approached the city, the populace, to the number of a hundred and fifty thousand, carrying lighted torches, joined in the procession, which extended over ten miles. The translation was attended by the great dignitaries of the kingdom, among whom the king himself, Charles V, was represented by his brother, the Duke of Anjou.

For us, dearly beloved, let us try and honor him as his clients and brethren, frequently invoking his powerful patronage before God in the words so often quoted from the Office of his feast: "O Thomas, pride and glory of the Dominican Order. O teacher of the sacred sciences, lift us to the contemplation of heavenly truths."

ST. PATRICK

I

THE SAINT'S CAPTURE AND CAPTIVITY

1. It is of St. Patrick, of his life and work in Ireland, and of the results of that life-work, that I will speak to you today. It is a theme that will be of interest, not only to those of the Irish race, but also to those who have come from other lands, since the children of Patrick it was who brought the light of faith and civilization to nearly all the peoples of Western Europe.

2. And, now, as to the causes that led the great apostle originally to Ireland, you are all more or less familiar with them, since they form one of the chief heads of the history of the Irish race. At that time and for long Ireland held the primacy of power among the nations of Western Europe. Her king, Crimhthon Mor (Crifon the Great), who died only three years before Patrick was born, not only held sway over his native country, but he was also master of Alba (or Scotland), which country

the Irish in good part colonized, and of the western half of Great Britain from Northumbria to the English channel, and had carried on successful wars with the mighty Roman empire. His successor, Niall, commonly known as "of the Nine Hostages," continued his conquests in Britain. After a great battle gained over the Roman legions on the banks of the Severn in Wales, he led his victorious troops across the English Channel, then called the Ictian Sea, and pushed his conquests through the fair fields of France on to the foot of the Alps, and, like Dathi, his successor, prepared to climb their "snow-capped heights," when he was struck down by the hand of an assassin. Checked in their career of victory, his followers retreated, devastating the country as they went along, and carrying away to their ships riches and captives. They returned, indeed, to their native land, but they carried home with them a prize more precious far than all the spoils of the mighty Roman Empire. This was the boy Succat, son of Calphurn and Conchessa, who was known in after times as our great apostle, Patrick.

3. He tells us himself of this captivity in his Confession, that precious document still extant, and which is the lucent reflex of his exalted and truly noble soul. "I, Patrick, the sinner, the rudest, and least, and most contemptible of all the faithful,

. . . was brought captive to Ireland with many thousands of men, as we deserved," he confesses, with the deep humility characteristic of the writings of the saint, "for we had forsaken God and had not kept His Commandments, and were disobedient to our priests, who admonished us for our salvation. And the Lord brought down upon us the anger of His spirit and scattered us among many nations, even to the ends of the earth, where now my littleness may be seen among strangers."

The question rises to the lips of every one: How were those years of Patrick's captivity passed, and what bearing had they on the future career of our great apostle? What was the manner of life of this captive boy of sixteen, living at the ends of the earth, as he calls it, hundreds of miles from his once happy home? Of that life he gives us a sketch in the same Confession, where he says: "After I came to Ireland I was tending cattle (*pecora*) daily, and I prayed frequently during the day, and the love of God, and His faith, and fear, increased in me more and more. And the spirit was stirred, so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that I remained in the woods and on the mountains. And even before the dawn I was roused to prayer in snow, and ice, and rain, nor was there

any slothfulness in me, as I see now, because the spirit in me was fervent."

Yes, there on that bleak mountain side in the North of Ireland, with no roof to shelter him but the canopy of heaven, no heart to pity him, save that which broke upon the cross in commiseration for our miseries, no hand to tend him, save that which feeds the young ravens calling on Him, the prayer of the afflicted boy rose as a sweet incense before God's throne, the results of which were one day to fall in copious showers of grace on the land of his captivity, and bring forth the abundant harvest of his ministry. In the solitude of the mountain gorge he found a sweet asylum from the din and distraction of the world. Thus passed his life during the years of his servitude to one of the chieftains of the country named Milcho.

II

HIS CALL AND PREPARATION

1. But God did not intend that Patrick should spend his entire youth in captivity. After six years of servitude, therefore, an angel appeared to him and commanded him to seek his liberty, and he escaped to his native land. We can fancy the joy

of the young man of twenty-two restored to his home and relatives, who, filled with the joy of his return, besought him, as he tells us, that, after so many tribulations, he should no more depart from them.

But with them he was not to remain. For, as he tells us, "I saw in the midst of the night a man who appeared to come from Ireland, whose name was Victorinus (he was his guardian angel), and he had innumerable letters, one of which he gave to me, and I read the commencement of the letter, which bore the title, 'The Voice of the Irish,' and as I read aloud the beginning of the letter, I thought I heard in my mind the voice of those who were near the wood of Fuclut, which is near the Western Sea, and they cried out: 'We entreat thee, O holy youth, to come and walk amongst us,' and my heart was greatly moved, so that I could read no more, and so I awoke."

The heart of the holy youth is touched at the entreaty of those generous and noble people, whom he had learned to love during his captivity. The children of Erin, who dwelt by the Western Sea, living in the darkness of idolatry, call out for the light of faith—that faith which they were so dearly to prize—that faith which they were to vindicate so nobly through centuries of persecution—that faith whose gory-stained banner we

are privileged to uphold, and which, with God's assistance, we shall transmit unsullied to our children as the dearest heritage of Erin's love. Patrick hears that cry, and his heart is moved. Will he fly to their assistance? No, his hour is not yet come. And here we are brought face to face with one of the most wonderful phenomena in the Church's spiritual life—the vocation to the Apostolate.

2. The Apostle, in God's design and providence, is destined to be the spiritual father of the people whom he is called to evangelize. Now, as to physical parentage, there is a law of nature by which the bodily features, the mental cast, and even the spiritual characteristics of parents are transmitted to the children begotten of them; and so in like manner of spiritual parentage. In God's design the characteristics, the spiritual idiosyncrasies of the Apostle are to be transmitted to the people he is called on to evangelize; and the higher the vocation to which such a people are called, the nobler and more divine the qualities of their apostle are to be.

Patrick is called to be the apostle of one of the most gifted races that the world has ever known—of a people with far-reaching traditions and an ancient civilization—of a people among whom, from the very first generation of their call to the faith, there was to bloom forth a life of high spir-

ituality so rare and excellent that it should astonish the world; and who were to be the preservers of the Church's spiritual life and Catholicity to all the regions of the earth. He was called to be the spiritual father of a people whose steadfast faith should be for all times a witness to the divinity of the Church. It was meet, then, that the apostle of such a race should be a man of rare sanctity and merit. Hence the secret of Patrick's forty years of proximate preparation for the apostolate of Ireland.

3. It were interesting to follow the career of our Saint during those forty years of preparation. During those years he came into contact with some of the most famous men of that wondrous fifth century. In Gaul he watched over the declining years of his great maternal uncle, St. Martin of Tours. He lived on terms of intimacy with the great light of the Western Church, St. Germain of Auxerre, under whose spiritual guidance he remained for thirty years, and whom he accompanied to Britain in order to put down the growing heresy of Pelagianism. He lived in the famous monastery of Marmoutier on the Loire, founded by his uncle, in company with St. Ninian of Scotland. He made a long sojourn in the isles of the Mediterranean Sea—those privileged isles which, from the holy

lives of the religious who peopled them, were called by St. Ambrose "a collar of pearls upon the sea."

While here he was brought into contact with the great saints Honoratus and Vincent of Lerins, and it was during his sojourn in those isles that he was favored with a vision of our Lord, from whom it is said he received the famous crosier, the "Staff of Jesus," which he ever afterwards carried, and which was held in the greatest veneration by the Church in Ireland for a thousand years, till it was at last destroyed by English heretics in the sixteenth century.

He witnessed the spiritual life of Rome, worshiped at its myriad shrines, and saw the places sanctified by the early martyrs. And, lastly, at Ivrea, at the foot of the Alps, a city afterwards greatly favored of Irish saints, he received his episcopal consecration from the hands of St. Maximus of Turin, in the presence of Theodosius II, emperor of the West, and of the Sovereign Pontiff, St. Celestine the First.

The old lives of the saint tell us that at the moment when Patrick was receiving episcopal consecration, three choirs were heard to join in triumphant response—the choir of the angels in Heaven, the choir of the Romans in the church,

and the choir of the children from Fuclut wood by the Western sea; and the burden of the chant of each was: "We the children of Erin beseech thee, holy Patrick, to come and walk once more among us and make us free."

And now Patrick, having been raised to the dignity of a Patrician, that is, a noble of the Roman empire, receives his commission to preach the faith in Ireland at the hands of Christ's vicar, and, accompanied by a numerous retinue of priests and clerics, sets out for the isle of his destiny.

Oh, memorable day among the days when Patrick first sets foot on the shores of Ireland; and beautiful upon the mountains the feet of him who comes to preach the gospel of peace! He had, to be sure, been to Ireland before; but then it was as a slave tending cattle on the Northern mountains. But now he comes, no longer a bondsman, but free, and destined to break the nation's chains; no more a stripling full of anxious fears, but a man in all the glory of a matured intellect and in the strength and fullness of power and jurisdiction. He comes with mind prepared and spirit braced to bear and brave all things, and with heart and soul utterly devoted to God and to the great enterprise before him.

4. The conversion of Ireland from the time of

St. Patrick's landing to the day of his death, says that great orator, Father Burke, is in many respects the strangest fact in the history of the Church. The Saint met with scarcely any opposition. His career resembled the triumphal progress of a king, rather than the difficult labors of a missionary.

The gospel with its precepts of self-denial, of prayer, of purity, in a word, of the violence which seizes Heaven, is not congenial to fallen man. His pride, his passions, his blindness of intellect and hardness of heart, all oppose the spread of the gospel; so that the very fact that mankind has accepted it so universally is adduced as a proof that it must be from God. Such has it ever been amongst the nations; and, yet, Ireland seems a grand exception. She is perhaps the only country in the world that entirely owes her conversion to one man. He found her universally pagan. He left her universally Christian.

She is again the only nation that never cost her apostle an hour of sorrow, a single tear, a drop of blood. She welcomed him like a friend; took the word from his lips; made it the leading feature of her life; put it into the blood of her children, and into the language of her most familiar thoughts; and repaid her benefactor with her utmost veneration and love.

III

PERSONAL QUALITIES OF THE APOSTLE

1. And much, indeed, had young Christian Ireland to love and venerate in her great apostle. Humble, penitent, prayerful, says Archbishop Healy, and with a burning zeal for souls, he possessed every qualification calculated to compel love and veneration. His humility and penance shine forth in every page of his writings. When an old man he wrote that remarkable document, the Confession, and in its opening sentences he styles himself the most sinful, the rudest, and least among God's servants. Again, speaking of his past, he says he was a stone sunk in the mire, and that for his sins he was led into captivity. For some indiscretion of his boyhood he was filled with compunction and with a lifelong sorrow. His sin, he said, was always before him, and with the prophet he cried out: "Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that I may weep day and night?"

As a result of this state of soul, we see him leave memorials wherever he passed of his penance, mortification and prayer. The early lives tell us that though his life was a most laborious one, yet, to the day of his death, he never ate meat of which

the people he labored among were so fond. And when preaching in the far west of Ireland he spent a whole Lent in prayer and fasting on the wind-swept summit of Croagh Patrick. On the Northwest again he passed weeks in penance in Lough Derg —a place ever since known throughout the Christian world as "St. Patrick's Purgatory." He himself tells us in the Confession that even when a boy slave on the slopes of Slieve Mish he prayed a hundred times by day and as many times by night, in the midst of snow, frost, and rain, and that he arose to pray before the dawn—a practice that he seems to have preserved during his whole life.

2. As to his zeal for souls, it was a devouring fire that consumed him. For their sake he left friends and country at the call of God. For their sake he relinquished the quiet of monastic life, the halls of sanctity and learning, and crossed the seas to a pagan people at an age when other clerics love the ease and comfort of retirement and home. For thirty years he traveled through every corner of the country, fording rivers broad and deep. crossing moor and mountain, in summer's heat and in winter's cold in the inclemency of the Irish climate. And though he settled all his early companions in churches which allowed of comparative ease of life; still he himself followed the rude

life of a missioner till he was ninety years of age. And even for the following thirty years, which he lived as bishop of the primatial see of Armagh, he led a strenuous life consolidating the churches he had won to Christ, and founding schools and monasteries everywhere.

What wonder that at the preaching of such a man the whole nation rose in response, and that, as he tells us, "the sons of the Scots became monks and their daughters in crowds became virgins in Christ, giving up all things for Him"; so that "the men of Erin," he continues, "who before worshiped idols and things unclean, now became the people of the Lord and the children of the living God."

How dearly he loved this flock which he won for Christ at the ends of the earth he shows by word and deed. He would not leave them even for a short time to visit his people, or go to see the places of the saints in Gaul once more. And when some members of his flock were maltreated by the British tyrant Coroticus he bewailed them in the language of a mother robbed of her children, and fiercely denounced the vengeance of God on the tyrant and his accomplices. For their sakes he lived, and for their sakes he was ready to die.

Such was the apostle sent by Pope St. Celestine I and by God's angel Victorinus, as the Book of Armagh tells us, to convert our forefathers to the

faith. No wonder the fruit was abundant and that the whole nation rose in response to his appeal.

IV

"THE ISLE OF SAINTS AND SCHOLARS"

1. But even the zeal and the other qualities of the apostle do not supply an adequate cause for the wonderful results that followed. Much was due to the generous ground on which the seed was cast.

The Celt is by nature poetic, generous, spiritual-minded, warm of heart, a lover of the supernatural and divine. Hence, when Patrick portrayed the love and the loveliness of the Saviour, and when the people saw the grandeur of the Gospel he preached, the love and affection of their nature rushed to him with the impetuosity of a mountain torrent. Forthwith the warrior laid down his battle axe and spear and became a man of peace and prayer. Forthwith the noble maid renounced the trappings of pride and walked forth from her father's hall. Up sprang the monasteries of Erin as at the touch of a magic wand; over by the lordly Shannon; away South where the Blackwater winds; down through the fairy glens of Munster; in the North by the shores of Neigh and Swilly; amid the rich

uplands of Meath; in the wooded glens of Wicklow; everywhere the sound of sacred psalmody was heard. Wonderful power of grace to effect such a revolution!

And the monasteries of Erin were more than shrines of holiness and prayer. They were the halls of science which preserved the learning of antiquity to the world.

At that time a pall of darkness and barbarism lay on the rest of Europe. The Roman Empire had persecuted the infant Church, and Providence, to avenge her, led down the barbarians from the North. Goth, Vandal, Frank, and Hun, bore down from their northern forests and broke up the rotten fabric of Roman civilization. Where, then, will learning find a home? Must the masterpieces of classic literature, must the treasures of Grecian wisdom perish for evermore?

Not so, my friends; the halls of Armagh, and Clonard, and Lismore, and Clonmacnois, and Bangor, and Glendalough, and a hundred others are open as a refuge for learning sacred and profane. Ireland was then and for five hundred years the university of Europe. Thither came from Britain and the Continent, aye, and from distant Syria and Egypt, all those who wished to perfect themselves in the science of the saints, or to drink at the fountain of pagan wisdom; and 'twas then that Ireland

earned among the nations of the earth the proud title of "the Island of Saints and Scholars."

2. Another and a greater glory still for the Isle of the Saints!

In those dark ages the Church had an arduous task to accomplish. She had triumphed over the Roman emperors. She must now encounter the rugged barbarians of the north and convert and civilize them. A tremendous task, my friends. Where will Rome turn for apostles? Well she knew where to find generous hearts who would go forth from kindred and home and devote their lives to the propagation of the Gospel. Columba arose, and Columbanus, and Fridolin, and Furzy, and Cuthbert, and Cathal, and Fergel, and Aidan, and Killian, and a host of others, and, as the old Frankish chronicler records, "a whole nation of sages seemed to land on the coasts of Gaul and spread themselves over Europe to convert and civilize it"; so that it has well been said that "for three hundred years the moral and intellectual supremacy of Europe belonged to the Irish missionaries." Nor were the Irish monks mere missionaries who labored personally in the Lord's vineyard and then passed away, leaving but the traces of their presence behind in works of Christian piety and zeal. They were in great part the founders of the monastic system of Western Europe.

V

"THE NIOBE OF THE NATIONS"

1. But sad days were in store for this queen of holiness and science. She had worn the crown of sanctity for centuries. Her beauty and her holiness were known and admired both of God and man. But the Lord was resolved that she should wear such a crown of victory as never before was placed on nation's brow, and, therefore, at two distinct periods of her history was she obliged to meet and conquer a storm of persecution and war unequaled in the world's annals.

The first of these great trials came upon Ireland at the beginning of the ninth century. At that time the Scandinavians from Denmark and Norway invaded the country in mighty force. They had in those centuries conquered England, Normandy, and all Western Russia. They made incursions on all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, founded powerful kingdoms in Sicily and southern Italy, and sacked central Italy itself even to the walls of Rome, and now they have come on the devoted island in the Atlantic. They came not only as enemies of the Irish nation, but much more of her faith, and hence we find that their most destruc-

tive fury was invariably directed against her monasteries and churches.

The gloomy and terrible worship of Odin, Thor, and Friga, was to replace the religion of Christ, and for three hundred years the whole land was covered with bloodshed and conflagration. For so long the nation fought with heroic courage in defense of home and altar, till at length she rose in her united strength and shook off the pagan invaders and cast them into the sea.

2. But her struggles for the faith of Patrick and of Christ were not yet to end. Another terrible and prolonged trial was awaiting her, and from the second half of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth a persecution for religion's sake, the most ruthless, the most persistent, the most insidious in its diabolical ingenuity that ever shook a nation, swept over the shores of Ireland, so that the whole land was deluged in the blood of martyrs.

I need not go into the painful history of the past four hundred years to prove this. The world admits it and cries shame on the cruel nation that was guilty of the crime. But I may give you one or two instances or references, and from them you can infer the fierceness of the struggle of your ancestors for the faith.

Lord Deputy Chichester, himself one of the most ruthless and insidious persecutors of the Irish Catholics, writing early in the reign of James I, says: "I know not how attachment to the Church is so deeply rooted in the hearts of the Irish, unless it be that the very soil is infiltered and the very air tainted with Popery. For they obstinately prefer it to anything else . . . to the care of their own property, and to all their hopes and prospects."

Lord Gosford, as late as the year 1796, said: "A persecution accompanied with all the circumstances of the ferocious cruelty is now waging in this country. Neither age nor sex, nor even acknowledged innocence, can excite mercy. The only crime which the wretched objects are charged with is the profession of the Roman Catholic faith." And in 1798, Lord Cornwallis, the same who surrendered to Washington at Yorktown, which ended the war of Independence, said "that the conversation at his table always turned on hanging, shooting, burning, etc., and if a priest is put to death the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company."

3. Here, too, are one or two instances, and they refer to the religious Order to which I belong and to the habit which I wear. For the Dominicans of those days—all honor to them, as well as to the other religious bodies resident in Ireland!—led their people bravely and met the brunt of the per-

secution. Well, the annals of our Order attest that at the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth the Dominicans counted seven hundred members in Ireland. Will it be believed that at the end of her reign, in 1603, the same Order counted only four members?

Again, and we have the authentic account of the General Chapter of our Order held in Rome in 1664 to attest, that of the six hundred Dominicans who peopled the various Dominican monasteries in Ireland in 1650, that is to say, fifteen years previously, only a hundred and fifty were then alive. In the twelve or fourteen years of Cromwellian rule no less than four hundred and fifty were killed off by persecution, and of the remaining hundred and fifty the greater part were in exile in foreign countries or wearing out their lives as slaves to the British and Dutch planters in Virginia and the West Indian isles.

Such may be looked on as an indication of the persecution suffered by the Irish people for the faith for three hundred years at the hands of the English heretics.

I need not refer to the indirect persecution for the faith sustained by your immediate forbears in the middle of the last century. When God visited His people with a terrible calamity and gaunt famine stalked over the land, there was food in abun-

dance for the people, but that food they could partake of only at the cost of the religion that they loved. And rather than touch the defiled meats presented to their famished lips they died of hunger by the roadside in hundreds of thousands; or they crossed the wide ocean and faced the uncertainties of life in, for them, a foreign land, the noble confessors of the religion of Jesus Christ.

4. O my friends, you will bear with me when I say to the men and women of the Irish race here present, be proud of those noble men and women, some of them your own fathers and mothers, who built up the Church of the living God throughout the length and breadth of this noble land. "Look unto the rock whence you are hewn, the hole of the pit from which you are dug out," and if material prosperity smile on you today, remember that they transmitted to you a heritage more precious far than all the gold of California—the priceless pearl of faith inherited through fifty generations. For this your ancestors fought; for this they struggled through long centuries of oppression, and with sacrifices the like of which the world had never known before.

You are children of the unconquered and unconquerable Irish race, be ye also children of Patrick, our great father in the faith. Practise the virtues taught you through the centuries of our his-

tory, and carry out the great mission given by God to our people, to be the propagators of the faith and the builders of the Church throughout all the new lands that modern enterprise has won to civilization. Cultivate, I say, the virtues that have characterized the people of our race in the past, and while loving this fair land of your birth or adoption, forget not that you are the inheritors of a glorious past, where fidelity to religion, purity, holiness, and love of God and country shine as a crown of light around the fair brows of the cradle land of your race, the isle of martyrs, saints, apostles, holy Ireland.

ST. JOSEPH

I

"Hail, holy Joseph, hail!
Father of Christ esteemed;
Father, be thou to those
Thy Foster Son redeemed."

THE JUST MAN

1. The feast we celebrate today, and the whole month alike, invite me to address you some words in praise of the holy Patriarch, St. Joseph. And I do so the more willingly as I know that my theme is one that commends itself to you all. For where is the true Catholic to be found nowadays who has not a devotion to St. Joseph, and who does not look up to him with a childlike trust and confidence?

But now I find myself at the outset confronted with a difficulty from the meager account left us, whether in the Gospels or in the tradition of the Church, concerning the details of his life. This deficiency, however, is more than made up for by the unique capacity in which he is presented to us in the Gospel—as foster father of our Lord,

Jesus Christ. For, when God raises up any one to an office of singular eminence in the hierarchy of beings, and when, moreover, He commends that personage, as He does St. Joseph, for the faithful discharge of the functions of that office, it is a certain proof of his, or her, pre-eminent sanctity and excellence.

2. But, O my brethren, what an honor is this that is conferred on our saint that he should be made the foster father of Jesus Christ? What a dignity to which a creature has been raised, that he should be constituted, as the Office of the Church says of him, "head of the sacred household," and guardian of the Son of God made Man. All dignities that can be conferred, save that to which the ever blessed Mother of God was raised, pale and vanish before his.

We venerate the holy angels who are constituted princes of the heavenly court, and who stand in the presence of the Most High to praise Him and to execute His will. We celebrate in a special manner the memory of the archangel Gabriel, to whom was entrusted the high mission of announcing to the Blessed Virgin Mary the mystery of the Incarnation. We honor the Order of the Priesthood to which was given power to forgive sins, and to consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

But what a dignity is this, O glorious saint, to which you are called, that you should stand in the place of the Eternal Father Himself and command, as if He were your own son, the Son of the Eternal God?

3. And who is there that considers the sublime functions that St. Joseph discharged as foster father of Jesus Christ that does not recognize in him a man of pre-eminent sanctity? If God, when he designed Jeremias to announce His law to the people and to preach to them penance for their sins, prepared him for this high function by sanctifying him while yet in his mother's womb, how must he not have prepared and sanctified St. Joseph, whom He designed from all eternity to be the foster father of His Son made man? If the lips of Isaias were purified with a burning coal from the altar that he might announce to the people the mystery of the Passion, how must not God have purified the lips and heart of St. Joseph, of him from whose mouth should come forth commands to the same God Incarnate, and whose soul should be moulded to carry within it a paternal love for Jesus Christ? If St. John the Baptist, at the sound of the words of the holy Mother and by the mere presence of Jesus Christ, was, at the Visitation, instantly sanctified, how holy must not be made St. Joseph, who for thirty years listened to the words of wisdom

coming from the lips of Jesus Christ, and who for so long a time dwelt in His hallowed presence?

4. And, in reality, if we consider one by one the relations which St. Joseph was privileged to hold with the Son of God, we shall be the more astonished that any such divine familiarity was permitted to a creature. The Gospel tells us that "Jesus was subject to him." Could anything better convey to us the trust He reposed in him, the immense love He bore him, or the veneration in which He held him? "He was subject to him" as to a father. He obeyed his every command. He looked up to him with the same love and reverence that a child looks up to its natural parent.

And what was the mutual interchange of affection between these two hearts during the years that they spent together in the house of Nazareth? When Jesus was still a child, Joseph encircled Him in his arms and pressed Him to his heart. It was his strong arm that procured food for Him. And when our Lord grew up to boyhood, it was St. Joseph who taught Him His trade. They labored together in the workshop, and they prayed together to the Father in the privacy of their holy home. How must not grace have accumulated in the soul of the holy Patriarch during those long years of intimate union with Him who is the source of grace!

And to what sanctity must he not have attained, since perfection is achieved by the exercise of God's holy presence!

The Church praises him as the "faithful and prudent servant whom the Lord hath set over His household." Now, we know on the authority of the Fathers of the Church that fidelity is the great human agency by means of which we are enriched with sanctity and merit. For each work done faithfully in correspondence with grace, causes greater and still more abundant grace to descend from the treasury of God. And prudence, also, we are taught, is the special gift of the Holy Spirit to him who is faithful to grace already given. And has not Scripture itself canonized the holy Patriarch when it says that "St. Joseph was a just man"? Now, justice in the sense of Holy Scripture, signifies absolute perfection. What wonder, then, that he should have been honored with angelic communications, as the Gospel tells us that he was in many well-known passages, or that God the Father should have thrown around his actions the shield of divine protection?

5. Who can contemplate such a life and not be filled with admiration and gratitude to God, who thus ennobles our race with such a prodigy of virtue? Whether we consider St. Joseph in the carpenter's shop, his lips giving issue to the canticle

of prayer that rises from his heart; or kneeling by the crib of Bethlehem amid the throng of adoring angels; or carrying the Infant Saviour in his arms a fugitive from Herod's fury; or taking shelter under the shadow of the palm tree in a heathen land, relying on the providence of God alone; or, again, if we consider him, after years of exile, returning to his home with Jesus and Mary; or seeking in the anguish of a father's heart his lost Son left behind in the temple; or, if we contemplate him passing those years of prayer and silent labor during which he became the model of the spiritual life; or, finally, dying in the arms of Jesus and Mary; does not his whole career emit an aroma of sanctity to be met with in the life of no other saint, and does it not appeal to us most powerfully to lead a life of virtue? Yes, dearly beloved, St. Joseph is pre-eminently the saint after God's own Heart—the saint who appears to have copied more closely than any other the virtues of his Divine Foster Son, and to have come closest to Him in every attribute of sanctity.

II

THE PATRON

1. But not for himself alone, or in order that he might fulfill the office of foster father to our

Lord was it that St. Joseph was raised to so high a pitch of sanctity.

It is among the mysterious ways of God's providence that a soul which has attained to an eminent degree of sanctity be raised to be not only a model for our imitation, but also our patron and advocate before the throne of mercy. This is especially the case with St. Joseph, whom our Lord has wished to honor by giving him to us as our director in life, our advocate before His throne in heaven, and our patron in all emergencies and vicissitudes of life. To us, therefore, St. Joseph should be beyond all other saints most dear because of those holy relations we have with him.

Let us venerate him in this threefold capacity today.

First, I say St. Joseph has been given to us as our spiritual director. My brethren, we all have many difficulties to contend with in the spiritual life. In this life we have to travel by ways new and unknown to us. Our path, besides, is beset with snares and pitfalls, into which, unhappily, only too many stumble. Within we have to contend with powerful and treacherous passions; without we are beset with strong and crafty enemies. "Our warfare is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, the rulers of this world of dark-

ness." How shall we, poor, frail creatures, escape so many dangers? We have need of a wise and prudent director, who may guide our steps and point out to us the secure way. And who so proper to discharge this office in our behalf as this great saint? Whilst on earth he was the guardian of the Infant Saviour. In fulfilling this office many were the difficulties he had to contend with, coming as well from the wickedness of men as from the powers of hell. And prudently did he guard the treasure committed to him, rescuing his dear Foster Child alike from the machinations of a perfidious king and the slanders of a wicked world; and it was the remembrance of this great trust that he discharged while on earth that moved the Church at a time when she was sorely beset by her enemies to commit to him the highest charge that was ever given to any saint, that of guardian of the universal Church and director of her destinies.

Moreover, our saint practised, while on earth, the highest virtues of the spiritual life. He trod giddy heights. He was admitted to the closest intimacy with the Saviour. He knows, then, all the subtle ways of drawing souls to God, and of teaching them to advance, with unfaltering steps, to the sublimest heights of sanctity. Go, then, to this true director of souls. Entrust yourselves fearlessly

to his keeping; and devote yourselves to him as his pupils all the days of your pilgrimage here below.

2. But St. Joseph has not only been given us as our director during life. He is, moreover, our advocate in death.

Brethren, we are all doomed one day to die. A day shall come when each one of us will be brought face to face with that grim messenger who shall come to summon us out of life. The supreme hour of our existence will have arrived, when we shall stand in the balance of Divine Justice. And, oh, who can contemplate without emotion that dread moment which shall decide our fate for eternity? A life of everlasting enjoyment with God or a living death forever in the abode of misery. The devils will at that moment put forth every effort to decide our lot for hell. They will gather around our death-bed to assault us with every species of temptation. We have need, then, of a powerful advocate who will come to our assistance in that hour. And this we have in St. Joseph, and as such the Church has recognized him in all ages. He, himself, during life, overcame all the forces of Satan, and so merited to die in the arms of Jesus and Mary; and this is why he has always been venerated as the advocate of a happy death. Invite him, then, while still in the midst of health, to be with you at your

dying hour, to allay the difficulties that shall then confront you. Let the frequent invocation of his name create in you a habit, so that in time of danger it may become as natural to you to invoke him as to breathe.

3. Finally, St. Joseph is a universal patron of souls, for the obtaining of every help from Heaven. This is the testimony of all who have had devotion to him. They say that never did they invoke the holy Patriarch in vain, and that in every necessity of life he powerfully assisted them. "Never do I remember to have asked any favor of St. Joseph that he did not grant," says St. Teresa. And, she continues, "the Lord appears to have given power to other saints to assist us in our single necessities; but experience shows us that St. Joseph gives us aid in all." "The Lord gives us to understand that as He wished to be subject to St. Joseph on earth, so, in Heaven, He does whatever the Saint asks." "I would wish all," she concludes, "to be devoted to St. Joseph, because I have long experienced the great favors that he obtained for me from God. I have never known any soul particularly devoted to the Saint who did not always advance in virtue."

Consecrate yourselves, then, dearly beloved, to the holy Patriarch. Ask of him help in all your needs. Choose him as your director in the path of virtue. Frequently invoke him to be with you at

your death. You may be certain of the issue, if, at that tremendous hour, you confidently call upon him. May it be so with you, and may the last words that issue from your lips be an invocation of the name of St. Joseph, associated with the saving names of Jesus and Mary.

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

"The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and the things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are; that no flesh should glory in His sight." (Cor., I, 27–29.)

I

INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that when God would bring about some great and astonishing results in the world, when He would work out some mighty revolution in the thoughts and in the lives of men, He usually selects weak instruments, according to the world's estimation, with which to carry out His designs—and this, in order that, to use the words of the Apostle: "no flesh should glory in His sight," but that all the merit of the work might be ascribed to Him alone. Thus, when He would deliver the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, and make

them a great and powerful nation, He seeks out, to effect this work, a poor shepherd who has spent half his life in the desert. Again, when His people are sore beset by the Assyrians, their inveterate enemies, He employs the weak hand of a woman, the incomparable Judith, to deliver them and send their enemies flying among the hills.

Do His people fall away from the faith and piety of their fathers? Do they transgress His laws and fall into impiety and crime? He calls up a man from the wilderness—it may be an Elias, or a Joel, or an Amos—endows him with a divine spirit and power, and through him and at his call brings them back to their duty and repentance. And, not to multiply examples, when the Son of God Incarnate would change the face of the earth; when He would destroy the ancient superstitions and establish in their place a religion opposed to the passions, to the prejudices, to the thoughts and conveniences of men from time immemorial, He goes down to the sea shore and seeks out some poor fishermen, and says to them: "Leave your nets and your tackle, and come and follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." And through these men He brings about such a change in the minds and in the manners of men as had not been seen since the beginning of the world.

Yes, truly, "the foolish things of the world hath

God chosen that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen; and the things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are; that no flesh should glory in His sight."

Thoughts like these come spontaneously to our minds, when we reflect on the life and actions of the great Saint whose festival brings to a close this beautiful and auspicious month.

Who among mankind more foolish according to the world's estimation; who more weak and contemptible than this illiterate virgin of Siena? And, yet, through the labors, and still more through the prayers and good example of St. Catherine, such results were brought about in the Church and in the manners and lives of clergy and people as none of the great statesmen and prelates of her time could have achieved.

And how is this? It is because the Almighty saw in her a fitting instrument for the working out of His great designs for the well-being of the Church, and for the reformation of society.

CATHERINE'S YOUTH

And now as to the manner of life led by St. Catherine, and the heroic virtues practised by her,

time permits me to give only their more salient features.

Catherine was the youngest of twenty-five children born of Joachim and Lapa, of the family of the Benincasa of Siena.

As a little girl she appeared to be different from all her companions and to have acquired a spirit of discretion and piety superior to her years. She was as one nourished with celestial love, living on prayer and contemplating in ecstasy the secrets of Heaven.

While yet a child, the attraction of prayer urged her to seek, like the hermits of old, the solitude of the desert. She cut her long and lovely tresses for fear of being loved with a profane love, and burned with a desire of going forth under the semblance of an apostle to evangelize the world.

In addition, she practised the greatest austerities. She clothed herself with sackcloth, nourished herself with but a little bread, and gave to the poor all she had, even her own garments. Her singular method of life brought upon her the reproaches and harsh treatment of her family. But her patience and constancy enabled her in the end to triumph over all, and with the consent of her parents she was permitted to receive the holy habit of the Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic while yet in her

fifteenth year. Such was the life of Catherine in her youthful years.

But who shall picture that life of combat and trial, of ecstatic love and glorious triumph, and of agonizing conflict with the powers of darkness, which Catherine lived in those years when she led a life hidden from the world?

She herself, under the obedience of her confessors, Friar Thomas and Blessed Raymond of Capua, has been obliged to give for the edification of all after ages the history of those interior trials and joys of her most wonderful and crucified life.

He, then, who would lift the veil of the hidden life of Catherine would perceive sweet raptures, heavenly splendors, visions of angelic beauty, mingled with profound darkness, agonizing conflicts, assaults of devils, horrid tempests, and anxieties, and tears and spasms more bitter than death. He would perceive her, at one time, conversing joyfully with the saints, with the angels, with Mary, with Jesus; at another, prostrate on the bare ground, covered with sweat and blood, prolong prayer, and watching, and scourging of her innocent body.

HER ESPOUSALS

Presently the heavens are unveiled before the

face of Catherine; the angelic hosts deploy in two great wings in the immense expanse of the firmament. An ocean of light spreads over the earth and unites it with heaven. The heavens give forth sweet songs of jubilee, and strains of melodious music. It is the day of the nuptials of the Son of God! His spouse is already prepared. Behold her! She is clothed in white and resplendent garments. A royal garland of pearls interlaced with lilies and roses crowns her snowy brow and golden hair. What peace and joy in her beautiful, expressive eyes! What a sweet smile plays about her rosy lips! What heavenly joy on that face! The rays of the Divinity are reflected on those features rendered more beautiful by the bashful modesty of the virgin.

Before her is seated on a splendid throne the great Mother of God. St. John, St. Paul, the patriarch St. Dominic, and all the blessed spirits surround her as a crown, and David sings to his harp the marriage hymn. Then "the most Beautiful amongst the sons of men," with a countenance radiant with all the beauty of the Son of God, approaches the holy virgin of Siena, and places on her finger the nuptial ring. Catherine is espoused to Jesus! The espousal with the God of the two testaments associates her with Him in the great designs He conceives for the reform of the Church and of the world.

THE STIGMATA

Nor is this all: for shortly after she receives a new consecration which clothes her with a divine power and dignity. Whilst rapt in ecstasy in the church of St. Christina, in Pisa, she is seen to compose herself so as to extend her arms in the form of a cross. Her countenance shines with an angelic beauty. Her eyes closed, her head sweetly inclined, her breast heaving. Then, struck with a mystical dart, she falls headlong to the pavement and remains in a swoon. And when she arises there appear on her hands, and on her feet, and on her side, the stigmata of the Crucified. O holy wounds graven on the body of our saint! You are the symbol and the proof of the association of love and of suffering of Catherine with the Saviour. And, dear Saint, can you not now say with the Apostle: "Let no man henceforth be troublesome to me; for I bear the stigmata of my Lord, Jesus Christ, upon my body." And "far from me be it to glory in anything save in the cross of my Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world."

From that hour she commenced to live the most privileged of all lives, viz., of association in the sufferings of her Spouse; so that she could say with the Apostle: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in

me"; and "I am filled with consolation. I superabound with joy in all my tribulations."

Thus consecrated as the spouse of Him "who feedeth among the lilies"; bearing the mystic ring of divine consecration on her finger; carrying the sacred stigmata graven on her body; suffering over again in her members the dolors of the Passion; is it surprising to see Catherine go forth on her Master's business the wonder and the portent of her age? Lifted superior to her sex, she from that day entered on an apostolate in the Church of God never before or since entrusted to a woman.

II

HER GREAT WORKS

At the inspiration of God she goes forth from her father's house and from the privacy of her cell, preaching to the people and calling on them to lay aside their anger and strife, and to return to the ways of penance with sincerity of heart. And with results that are astonishing!

Blessed Raymond of Capua, her confessor, a man of great learning and holiness, and the companion in her missions, considers it impossible to narrate how many hatreds she extinguished, how many conversions she brought about. He relates

having seen at times more than a thousand persons come to her in a single day. Many of them, at the mere sight of the heavenly light that shone in her face, felt themselves affected with the sacred fire of virtue. Others, before she spoke, would run repentant to the feet of a confessor. So great was the multitude of penitents that many Friars Preachers were not enough to hear the confessions of all. Such fruits of eternal life induced Pope Gregory XI to depute her to an unwonted apostleship by granting that she should go among the Sienese and bring with her three friars, she to convert the sinners, and they to absolve them from their sins.

Blessed John Dominic, himself a holy and most eloquent preacher, at hearing in Pisa the sermons of Catherine, and at seeing the efficacy of her unapproachable eloquence, was filled with astonishment. The venerable Carthusians of Gorgona besought that the saint might preach to them, and her voice so powerfully moved and carried them away that they never ceased repeating that Catherine was a miracle of wisdom.

And what wonders of charity and zeal did she not exhibit in times of great public trial and distress?

In that land of Tuscany, ravaged by civil war and famine, broke out the plague, horrible, terrifying. This only gave a new opportunity to Catherine to renew the prodigy of her love. Oh, if you

had seen her, sad and sorrowful, go about as an angel of light amid the obscure shadows of death, comforting with her aid and with her tears the unhappy dying ones! Never did a mother run with such tender affection at the agonizing cries of her children as did this loving virgin fly everywhere amid the horrors of the pestilence and the convulsions of the dying. Her charity and her prayers were a source of consolation to all, and they brought back to penance and rectitude of life many who had up to that forgotten their duty to God and to their immortal soul.

But time forbids me to go more into detail concerning the wondrous labors she underwent for the good of souls during this period of her career.

Let me hasten to tell of the great public acts of her life.

THE NEW PETER THE HERMIT

At this time Amurath, the terrible and perfidious sultan of the Turks, was on the point of flinging from his throne the weak Emperor Paleologos, who with much difficulty still preserved Constantinople to Greece, on the one hand; and on the other, having formed an alliance with the Tartars, threatened to invade Hungary and thrust himself into the heart of Christendom and drown in blood the

Church and the civilization of the West. A spirit of hatred and discord seems at this time to have pervaded Europe, and almost all the Christian States were at war with one another.

Wherefore, Gregory XI and Catherine wisely devised to turn to the salvation of the Church and to the peace of Europe the warlike spirit of the people and the indomitable ambition of their kings.

It was then that she was seen with the magnanimous enthusiasm of a Peter the Hermit, and the inspired eloquence of a St. Bernard of Clairveaux, going from country to country enkindling a generous ardor in the breasts of warriors; writing letters to kings and princes, calling on them to undertake the holy enterprise; dispatching her followers, among whom were counted many of the greatest prelates and captains, to call upon the peoples to take up arms against the greatest enemy Christianity has had to battle with in the centuries of her existence. Alas! through the discord and jealousy of the crusaders themselves, as well as through the treachery of false friends, the enterprise, like those of former centuries, ended in disappointment and failure.

CATHERINE THE AMBASSADRESS

A new and more arduous combat was reserved for the holy Dominican heroine. The fourteenth

century in which our Saint lived was one of the most turbulent in the history of the Church. The inhabitants of Rome, as many a time before, had risen in revolt against the Sovereign Pontiff and driven him into exile to Avignon, where he got shelter and protection from the king of France. All Italy was torn and convulsed with civil wars.

In Rome itself, the center of the Christian world, the demagogue, Cola di Rienzi, carried away the deluded people and dreamed of setting up once more a commonwealth modeled on the republic of pagan times. The arrogance of the princes and the fury of the people tyrannized in the name of liberty. As a result, majestic churches and monuments the most venerable in Christendom went to ruin. Such was the decay brought about in the city of the popes that the grass grew on the very streets, while bands of soldiers of fortune, at one time in the pay of this or that petty tyrant, at another licensed to live by sack and robbery, defiled the streets with slaughter and heaps of ruins.

As might be expected, Catherine labored without repose to bring about peace between father and children. Elected ambassadress of the republic of Florence, then at war with the Sovereign Pontiff, she flies to Avignon and presents herself before the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

What a scene is here presented to us! Under the

gilded vaults of the great consistorial hall, Gregory XI, in pontifical garb, is seated on a magnificent throne. The cardinals, vested in their scarlet robes, surround him as a crown. Solemn is the aspect of that venerable senate, when the humble sister, with modest look and recollected mien, is admitted to the august assembly. All eyes are turned on the pious messenger in her white tunic and black mantle. All gaze with a holy respect on those cheeks pale with penance, that brow on which shines the light of inspiration, and that virginal face which reflects all the holiness of a soul pure as the light, tender as love, ardent as the lamp which John saw before the throne of God. At a sign from the Pontiff, Catherine lifts for an instant her eyes to heaven and begins to speak. Such was her eloquence, so great was the force of her reasoning, such the sacred fire that burned in her words, that the venerable Pontiff, with a voice filled with emotion, exclaimed: "Woman, that you may see that I desire peace, I place everything in your hands!" Ah, an humble sister chosen by the Church and by Italy to arbitrate concerning their destiny! A spectacle so sublime history never presented before or since.

THE TRIUMPH OF HER LIFE

This was only part of her triumph, and before

leaving the court of Avignon, she induced the Pope, in spite of all the artifices that hell and all the influence of an interested and crafty policy of king and prelates could raise against her, to return to Rome.

This opposition was carried so far that even at the end of prolonged contests Gregory's own father prostrated himself on the threshold of the papal palace to prevent the Sovereign Pontiff's return. But the Vicar of Jesus Christ, strengthened by the magnanimous example and by the lofty presence of Catherine, and repeating the words of David: "Thou shalt walk on the asp and the baselisk," passed over his prostrate form, and returned with his holy guide and counsellor to Rome.

It was a joyous day, that 17th of January, 1377, when Rome, after a widowhood of two and seventy years, received again within her walls the Supreme Pastor of Christendom; and we can well conceive the joy and festivity which the whole population exhibited at the entry of their father and king. The papal flag is unfurled and imposingly given to the gale. Amid the sound of trumpets and strains of sacred music, with the whole population dancing for joy, with streets strewn with flowers and Arras tapestry, the Sovereign Pontiff advances, riding on a noble charger, and enters the Holy City. At his appearance all hands are waved, all hearts are

moved. The air resounds with songs and cheers, mingled with the sound of musical instruments. In the midst of universal expressions of joy and gladness the Father of Christendom is conducted to his home.

It shows the humility of her who had brought about this happy restoration of the Father to his children that Catherine did not enter Rome that day.

THE PEACEMAKER

Think not that here ends the mission of this lofty heroine of the Church. She who had reconducted the Pope to the Holy City in that land bathed in the blood of martyrs near the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul, after an absence of two and seventy years—a feat which the most influential and prudent statesmen of that age could not achieve!—she, I say, without allowing herself a moment's repose after such gigantic labors, girds herself for new combats and victories.

The war between the Republic of Florence and the Papacy growing more bitter and obstinate than ever, Gregory places anew everything in the hands of Catherine; and she, arbiter of peace and war, flies once again to Florence.

There all the hypocrisy and trickery of politicians is put to work to deceive and terrify the

holy ambassadress; but in vain. And when the mob, armed and furious, seeks to put her to death, she goes to meet them, serene and intrepid, and declaring that she is ready to shed her blood for the Church and her country, offers her neck to the dagger of the assassin. O woman! O heroine! What battles are not won when one fights with such magnanimous courage! And the heroine of the Church and the Papacy conquers; and towards the end of July, 1378, under Urban VI, peace is signed between the Pope and Florence.

Nor is this all. But, alas, the narrow limits of a discourse forbid me to tell of the noble part she took in sustaining the true Pope, Urban VI, in that most trying crisis in the Church's history, the Great Schism of the West, of the sublime treatises she composed on the mystic and interior life, and of the reformation of manners brought about among clergy and people, a reformation which ended later on by triumphing over the hateful schism which drew its origin and nourishment from corruption of manners.

THE END

Not all yet. Like the heroes, this holy daughter of St. Dominic is not content if she does not yield up her life in her last battle.

With His death our Lord founded His Church

and redeemed the human race. Death, which is the most tender expression of fortitude and love, death in Jesus Christ and for the salvation of the Church, is the most ardent desire with which is consumed this unconquerable heroine. Amid the languor of ecstasy she embraces the feet of her adorable Beloved and bathes them with burning tears, crying amid the most tender convulsions of love: "Grant, O Lord of my soul, that I may die for Thee! Furnace and abyss of charity, dissolve this light cloud of my body, that I may be with Thee!"

And then, turning towards her weeping spiritual children who surround her, she looks upon them with ineffable sweetness and presses them one after another to her maternal heart. Then lifting her hand and blessing them for the last time, she fixes her eyes on high as if she beholds the gates of the Heavenly Sion, and calling out with Jesus on the cross: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and pressing in her hand the palm of victory, she goes to receive her exceeding great reward in Heaven.

ST. DOMINIC

I

1. When I come before you today to eulogize the virtues and renowned works of the saint whose feast we are celebrating, I feel I come but to recall reverent memories of one of your favorite saints —of a father tenderly beloved; of a patron whose power you have often proved; of one, therefore, in whom your affections are entwined as with the arms of a life-long devotion and of deepest thankfulness for past benefits. The ties, moreover, that bind you, brethren of this town, in friendship with the children of St. Dominic, are of the most intimate and sacred kind. For now close on fifty years we, the Dominicans, have lived and labored among you; your joys have been our joys; your sorrows have been ours; and you, in turn, have generously supported us in our needs.

But if I would appeal to your own most hallowed and life-enduring sentiments, I would remind you that you are yourselves children of St. Dominic. You are, I say, allied personally to him through

your membership in the association founded by him, and Dominic lives among you still in the spirit of piety you cherish to the devotion of the Rosary.

Mindful of this, your devotion to St. Dominic and his Order, it is to me a pleasing task to lay before you once again the record of that holy life, and to call up anew the memories of those exalted virtues that made our saint, to use the words of the Church's Office, "shine in his day, as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full, and as the sun when he shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God."

2. Allow me, therefore, dear brethren, to carry your minds back to an age very different indeed to that we have experience of—to a period notable in the history of the world as that in which many of the great institutions of our time took their origin.

A strange and unique age indeed was that in which our Saint lived. On the Continent of Europe the feudal lords, now risen to the height of their feudal power, were with difficulty held in check by the strong hand of Plantagenet or Capetian or Swabian monarch; whose forces, however, were to be welded into one grand host and hurled against the hordes of Saladin for the defense of the Holy Land. It was an age when an insatiable thirst for

knowledge began to grow among the people, hitherto sunk in grossest ignorance, and when the great schools of Europe were crowded with students; with the result that this period produced some of the most cultured intellects that ever graced the world —an age withal of appalling crime, when heresy stalked abroad, and involved Christendom in a network of societies whose aim was the utter destruction of the religion of Jesus Christ.

It was an age when the millions, ground down by a slavery only a little less degrading than that of the pagan times, began to revolt against their tyrannical masters, and when the passions of men, grown turbulent with two centuries of heresy and schism, needed the heroic example and the enlightened doctrine of a great man to subject them to the yoke of reason. Such a man did Providence provide in the person of St. Dominic, and his influence on his own age, and on succeeding times, is a factor that is well nigh incalculable.

3. Born of parents no less illustrious by their virtues than by their nobility of blood, our Saint was heir presumptive to the large possessions of the Guzmans, one of the most powerful families of Spain. As was not unusual with the saints, St. Dominic began even from his childhood to show signs of his future greatness, and even then to practise many of those rare virtues which drew

upon him later on in life the veneration of all who knew him.

At fourteen his parents thought well to send him to the College of Palencia, then one of the most renowned seats of learning in Spain. Needless to say that one already so well disposed applied himself with all the ability and diligence he could command to the study of those high ecclesiastical sciences which made the scholars of that age so famous, and in which he showed himself afterwards so proficient. But what particularly distinguished the boy among his fellow-students was his angelic purity of life and his tender compassion for the poor. After ten years spent in the University of Palencia, when he was in his twenty-fourth year, Dominic was raised to the priesthood.

At this time the city of Osma, in Old Castile, was the center of a noteworthy ecclesiastical reform. The Bishop of this place, a holy and enlightened man, resolved to convert the Canons of his cathedral into Canons Regular. By this arrangement they became subject to stricter discipline and community of life, and in order to secure the services of one who would be a source of edification and encouragement to the others, he invited Dominic to join the newly formed community. This Dominic joyfully assented to, as nothing could give him greater pleasure than to lend a needful hand in

the advancement of Church discipline. The life-long attraction that he felt for the cloister, moreover, seemed now to be realized, so he joyfully made his profession as a Canon Regular.

"Now it was," says Blessed Jordan of Saxony, who knew him well, "now it was that he began to appear among his brethren like a bright-burning torch. The first in holiness, the last in humility, he spread around him an odor of life that gave life, and a perfume like the sweetness of summer days. Day and night he was in the church, praying, as it were, without ceasing." It was his custom, we are told, to spend the night in prayer, and to speak to God with his door shut. But often there might be heard his groans and sighs which burst from him against his will. His one constant petition to God was for the gift of true charity. For he was persuaded that he could not be truly a member of Christ unless he consecrated himself to the work of gaining souls, following the example of Him who sacrificed Himself without reserve for our redemption. This zeal for perishing souls was, as we are told by another of his biographers, a continual and painful wound in his heart. And even at this early period he had conceived the project of going one day to preach the faith to the Cuman Tartars, then ravaging the Church in Hungary and the neighboring countries, a project that haunted

him to his dying day. In the silence of the cloister Dominic was in fact being trained for his future apostolate, even as his great master and prototype, St. Paul, was prepared in the desert of Arabia to carry the Word of God among the Gentiles.

II

1. It was while he was yet at Osma that an incident occurred that changed the whole course of his life and brought into full play those latent powers of nature that fitted him to be a leader among his fellows. The prior of his convent, Don Diego of Azevedo, now raised to the episcopate, was selected by the king of Castile to negotiate a marriage between his son and a princess of one of the royal houses of Europe. Don Diego considered none better to accompany him on his delicate mission than the holy subprior of his convent, Brother Dominic. And whilst journeying through the South of France the holy men witnessed for the first time the ravages wrought in that distracted country by the heresy of the Albigenses. Their experiences on the journey roused the zeal of the companion religious, and at the termination of their embassy they asked and obtained permission from the Pope to labor in the country of the heretics.

Now the Albigensian heresy, which ravaged the fair fields of Southern France, if indeed a heresy it

may be called at all, was one different in character from all the heresies that had hitherto arisen in the Church. Begotten in the second century of pagan parentage, the heresy of Manes, a Persian by birth, established itself successively in three different continents, and lingered on in one form or another through the centuries that followed, down to the period of which I speak. Masonic, if I may so describe it, in its constitution, the professors of this nefarious sect concealed under a garb of exterior austerity and sanctity of life an appalling corruption of manners. Neither time nor inclination permits me to speak at length on the tenets or practices of this foul sect. Suffice it to say that there is not a single one of the great Christian truths that it did not reject, nor a single practice of holy religion that it did not overthrow to make way for the most hideous and obscene practices of paganism. This heresy, which had created great disturbance in Asia and Christian Africa in earlier centuries, within the preceding century had found a footing in several countries of Europe, established itself in over a thousand cities of France and Italy, and at last found a congenial home in the corrupt Gallo-Roman civilization and licentious manners of the inhabitants of Provence and Languedoc.

The ravages wrought wherever it took a

hold were appalling. Churches and monasteries were sacked, and the religious were subjected to grievous persecution. The lands of the Catholics were wasted with fire and sword. Murders and pillage went on to such an extent that the envoy of the King of France testifies "that he had seen monasteries sacked and overturned, their holy inmates murdered, and that he had seen the dwellings of men changed into dens of wild beasts." Such then was the system that Dominic felt himself called upon to grapple with and overthrow. Nothing daunted by the gigantic difficulties of the undertaking, Dominic almost single-handed, but trusting in the divine help, undertook the task of their conversion. With a singleness of purpose rare even in a saint, he entered on the difficult work of bringing them back to God.

2. I will ask you, my brethren, to consider the life of this brave man as he labored among the heretics. See him as he ceased not day or night, working for their welfare. See him day after day preaching, reconciling heretics and sinners, ministering the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, hitherto rejected by them. Often he enters into controversy with the chiefs of the sect and confutes them. It was then that there stood him in good stead that mature knowledge that he acquired in the schools, which enabled him with ease to overthrow

his antagonists in argument. Nor were there wanting miracles in abundance to confirm the doctrines of the saint and to proclaim his own virtue. But far more convincing than his eloquence and the soundness of his doctrine were the transparent holiness of his life and the austerity of his manners. Three times a night, we are told, he made the blood flow from his bruised body, while hair-shirts and iron girdles and all the instruments of self-punishment usual with the saints were familiar to him. In the midst of all his labors he never tasted meat or wine, considered then as now a necessity in those countries. And as he was seen going from district to district infested with heresy, barefooted, without scrip or purse, carrying along his breviary and the book of the Epistles of St. Paul, he appeared to all the living image of his Divine Master, whose ministry he was fulfilling.

Nor were there wanting persecutions to put to trial his already matured virtue. Often was he pelted in the streets and jeered at as a man of no account. But his zeal and confidence in God continually sustained him. And in this connection I will relate an anecdote that is told of him. Once, when he was warned of a plot to murder him, he treated the matter lightly, saying in his humility: "Alas, I am not worthy of martyrdom." And when afterwards he was asked what he would have done

had they waylaid him, he with the sentiments of a hero replied that he would have begged of his murderers not kill him at a stroke, but to cut him to pieces, bit by bit, and having plucked out his eyes, leave him to die a lingering death, that he might suffer the more for Jesus Christ, and merit a more resplendent crown.

Occasionally his voice is heard amid the clash of hostile sabres, and in the councils of armed men; for the heretics were no lambs in those days; but if it is heard it is ever in the interests of justice and clemency. This fact of his presence in the Christian army gave color to prejudiced writers of a later day to charge our saint with cruelty, to brand him as "a bloody man," and to accuse him of bigotry and bitter zeal. But for this charge there is no shadow of historic proof nor any trace of innuendo in the writings of contemporary authors.

3. It was during those eleven years spent in laboring among the heretics of Languedoc that there was matured in his mind the project, at once bold and novel, of founding an Order whose special object should be to unite the active and contemplative life, and whose mission, the salvation of souls through the ministry of preaching. The materials for this new and, at that time, unique method of life were ready to hand in the handful of devoted helpers who had gathered round him, attracted by

the brilliancy of his works in the cause of religion and the splendor of his virtues. When his plans were matured he determined to put his young companions to study under a competent master, while he himself should go to Rome to seek from the Sovereign Pontiff the confirmation of his rule and Order.

Arriving in the Eternal City, he is received with great marks of respect by the reigning Pontiff, Innocent III, and the Fathers of the General Council of the Lateran, called specially for the suppression of the great heresy. But when Dominic proposed to the Sovereign Pontiff the establishment of his Order, the Pope was for a time taken aback at the vastness and novelty of the proposal. For you must remember, my dear brethren, that monastic life as practised hitherto was confined to the cloister, and those who undertook religious life cut themselves off totally from communication with the world to devote themselves solely to the work of personal sanctification. But here was the proposal for the establishment of an Order of apostolic men whose lives would be divided between the cloister and the world, and who, to the work of personal sanctification, should join the active life of preaching and ministering to the salvation of souls.

Moreover, the functions of the projected Order seemed to trench on the prerogatives of the epis-

copate. For, up to this time to the bishops alone, together with coadjutors selected with especial care from the ranks of the secular clergy, were allotted the office and function of preaching the divine word. Innocent, therefore, demurred to the proposal; and while he hesitated, as he himself tells us, he had a vision in which he seemed to see the great church of St. John Lateran, the Cathedral Church of Christendom, shaken as it were to its foundations and about to fall, were it not that it was supported on the shoulders of two men, one of whom he recognized before him in the person of St. Dominic. I need not tell you that the other was Dominic's friend and fellow-laborer, Francis of Assisi. The Pope hesitated no longer, but granted the desired request, and from that time to his blessed death, Dominic belonged no longer to France or Languedoc only, but to the universal Church and to the world.

III

1. It is an acknowledged fact that one of the most extraordinary revivals of religious sentiment ever witnessed in the world was that which took place at the inception of the Mendicant Orders. This is not the place to discuss the various influences that led to that revival. But undoubtedly one of the most potent were the character and virtues

of their holy founders. Francis had preceded Dominic by a few years, and at the first Chapter of his Order he had the happiness of seeing around him no less than 5000 of his brethren, the delegates of a vast organization.

But the fields were white for the harvest, and Dominic also shared in its abundance. Within three months after his arrival in Rome he clothed over a hundred disciples, and Paris, Bologna, Padua, Florence, Metz, Toulouse, Madrid, and a hundred other cities gave the élite of their students and professors to swell the ranks of the newly founded Order. Within four years from the confirmation of the Order by Pope Honorius III, in 1216, Dominic, through the labors of his children, exercised a powerful influence over half of Christendom.

2. It is often the same with the career of great men as it is with that of the sun, who, gathering power and brilliancy as he ascends to his meridian, diffuses his softest and most effulgent rays as he tends to his decline. Thus it was with Dominic. Who shall describe the vastness and grandeur of his labors during the last seven years of his life? Time and again he is seen crossing Europe on foot, preaching in the cities and hamlets as he goes along —converting multitudes. Now he distributes the members of his Order throughout the chief seats of learning in Europe. Now he undertakes the dif-

ficult task of reforming communities of nuns by command of the Pope. Now he establishes concord among warring citizens, and addresses whole populations in the public squares of the cities when the churches are found too small for his vast audience. Now he delivers lectures in theology in the Papal Court in the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff and the College of Cardinals, and is constituted Master of the Apostolic Palace, an office which his children have held in uninterrupted succession for seven hundred years. Now he wins the most celebrated professors of the universities, and clothes them with the habit of his Order. Today he is seen raising the dead to life and performing other astounding miracles. Tomorrow he tries to fly from the scene of his fame, and hide his holiness, when he is commanded by the Pope to stay in the Eternal City.

Amid all his labors he preserved his love of mortification. Never did he allow himself the luxury of a bed, or even a room of his own, and his usual place of rest by night was the hard pavement of a church or wayside grotto, whose walls he nightly three times stained with his blood drawn from him by those fearful scourgings with the iron chain that served him for a girdle.

3. I should not close this account of his life without saying a word concerning an institution founded

by him with which you are all familiar. This is the devotion of the Rosary. It is said that when our Saint was laboring in the country of Toulouse and was afflicted with his little success among the heretics, our Blessed Lady appeared to him, entrusted to him her chaplet of the Rosary, and commanded him to establish her devotion among the Catholic population. The success that attended on the establishment of this new devotion was phenomenal. Heretics who had hitherto resisted the exhortations of the Saint now appeared thoroughly convinced of their errors and sought reconciliation. Great sinners were converted and began to walk in the ways of piety. Confraternities were established in all lands by the Saint and his companions; and religion that had been before now flickering and seemed about to die, at once is seen to gather new life and brilliancy.

Nor was the devotion of the Rosary a mere impulse of the time that was destined to die with a change of time and circumstances. The Rosary of Dominic has survived the vicissitudes of seven hundred years; to be seen today, not a worn-out institution of the Middle Ages, but a living force in the Church, influencing all states and ages and warming the whole of Christendom with devotion to the Person and the Mysteries of our Lord, Jesus

Christ. You yourselves, my brethren, feel perhaps the benign influence of the Rosary, since you are members of the Rosary Confraternity, and as such allied to the labors and the successes of St. Dominic, and indebted under God to his ministry, and participating in the privileges and indulgences of this, the earliest and greatest of the Confraternities.

4. Another institution of the Saint, novel in its character, but far-reaching in its effects, is the Association of the Third Order. I have not time to say much on this unique and most excellent method of life first introduced into the Church by the founder of the Friars Preachers. Allow me, however, to remark that up to this time the spirit of the world had only too often invaded the sacred precincts of the cloister. Dominic, with the skillful eye of the practised tactician, before the close of his fruitful life was the first to see the advantage of introducing the spirit and practice of the cloister among those employed in worldly pursuits. By the institution of his Third Order he opened up a new avenue to the attainment of the highest sanctity and brought the rarest virtues of the religious life within reach of those living in the world. This method of life has been embraced by people of every rank and employment. And as a

testimony of God's blessing and approval we behold no less than ninety beatified and canonized saints belonging to this Order.

And now, worn out with zeal as much as by his extraordinary labors, Dominic comes to die. What are the fruits of his life? God alone, we know, can compute the merits of every soul that comes before Him in judgment. But yet, it is permitted to mortals to review the results of the labors of His servants, and receive edification from their recital. What then, I repeat, are the results of our saint's life?

(1) A great heresy extinguished by the labors of the saint and his followers, and the Catholic religion re-established in two entire kingdoms. (2) Three religious Orders founded, whose labors should enrich the Church, the principal one of which should become so famed for learning that its members became the recognized teachers of theology in most of the universities of Christendom, while the lives of its missionaries were so heroic that within a century from his blessed death it could count no less than 14,000 martyrs who gave their lives for the exaltation of the Faith in all lands. (3) A new method of prayer propagated, which restored devotion to the Passion and Mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ. (4) Ecclesiastical discipline re-established in relaxed provinces, and

the office of preaching established on such a basis as had never before been witnessed in the Church. (5) A spirit of zeal infused into the priesthood which, dating from the inception received from him, has developed into the wonderful activity of the religious Orders in after times. (6) The preaching of the Gospel carried to regions hitherto considered inaccessible.

Such were the results of the labors of the great Saint whose feast we are celebrating—of that holy and enlightened man who knew so well the wants of the Church, and who possessed a boldness equal to his knowledge. An innovator in the truest and noblest sense of the word, St. Dominic deserves the gratitude of all ages. His death, which took place at Bologna, in the fifty-first year of his age, was in keeping with his life, and seemed but the concluding act of a great drama which represented the triumph of the enlightened spiritual man over the grossness of the world; of sanctity over the contending forces of hell; of a man gifted with the fullness of the spirit of God, over all that is little in human nature; and who in the full assurance of an everlasting inheritance, the reward of a life rich in merits and good works, goes to meet his God with inconceivable joy and serenity of soul.

His last words were an assurance to his weeping brethren that he would always remember his chil-

dren before the throne of the Most High, and that he would be of more help to them after his death than he had ever been in life. Trusting in the dying assurance of our great father, let us kneel down and address to him with confidence our prayers.

O tender father of the Friars Preachers, powerful patron of the children of the Rosary, permit us here today to address to you once again the words of prayer applied to you by the Church, and repeated so often by your children as the expression of their confidence in your powerful intercession: "O wonderful hope which thou gavest to those who wept for thee at the hour of thy death, when thou didst promise that after thy departure thou wouldst help thy children. Fulfill, O father, what thou hast said, and help us by thy prayers!"

THE SPIRIT OF THE DOMINICAN ORDER

I

1. I am sure that the sentiment that is predominant in your hearts this evening is one of thankfulness to God for the graces of the past eight days. Yes, let us confess it in the fullness of our hearts, the grace of a well made retreat is among the greatest that a loving and bounteous God confers on his chosen children. It is a grace that leaves its impression not only on individuals, but also on whole communities, and that works towards a permanent state of fervor and perfection amongst them.

And I have no doubt that you, dear Fathers and Brothers, have striven to coöperate with this greatest of graces, and that as a result you feel yourselves stirred to a life of greater fervor, and look forward to a career of zeal and perfection from this day.

It is usual with those who are making a retreat to form in the course of it resolutions for the government of their lives. Everyone makes some reso-

lutions, and the better the retreat has been made, the more precise and definite will be the resolutions one makes; because he sees his failings the more clearly, and they make the deeper impression on him.

Now it often happens that when religious look back over the resolutions of their past retreats, they find that they have neglected some, forgotten others entirely, performed the rest badly, and they find themselves just as imperfect as they were years ago. And in coming out of retreat they feel diffident of themselves, and doubt as to whether these resolutions may not suffer the fate of the former ones. They see the extent of their obligations, on the one hand; and their weaknesses and the dangers to which they are exposed, on the other; and the sight of these weaknesses and dangers, and the consciousness of past failures in keeping the resolutions they had made, creates in them a diffidence as to whether the present resolutions may not turn out a failure also.

That we should fail in keeping our resolutions is, of course, our own fault. For God will not be wanting on His part to give us abundant graces to keep them, if we only adopt the proper means to this effect. Now, among the means given us to stay us in our good resolutions, there are some which are of unfailing efficacy; and one of these is devo-

tion to our holy father, St. Dominic. Let me speak to you this evening on this important subject.

2. Among the mysterious ways of God's providence it has pleased Him that the founders of religious Orders should be in after ages models for the direction of their children, and advocates and intercessors on their behalf before His throne. It has pleased Him, I say, that the virtues that are most necessary for the attainment of the end of their Order should be found in a conspicuous manner in them. Does a saint found a contemplative Order, like the Carthusians? He is a man wholly given to prayer and union with God. Is he the founder of an Order devoted to works of charity? He himself is a man who in his day was celebrated for works of such a character. Is he raised up to be the founder of an Apostolic Order, such as is our own? God wills that he be a man powerful in word and work and one whose ministry is made fruitful by the conversion of many souls.

And amongst the founders of religious Orders who were conspicuous for their virtues, our Order has no reason to complain. Where could a model more holy be found, to give an example to his children? He was in his day the "mirror of the priesthood," and as the liturgy says of him, "the light of the Church "; "the doctor of truth"; "the rose of patience"; "the shining ivory of chastity"; "a

fountain of wisdom," and "the preacher of grace." His life was so modeled on that of our blessed Lord that even the Eternal Father Himself took notice of it, as was shown in a vision to St. Catherine of Siena. For, on a certain occasion the Divine Persons appeared to her accompanied by the Saint; and the Eternal Father addressed her, and said: "Beloved daughter, behold, I have begotten these two sons, the One by nature, the other by a sweet and tender adoption." And, as she stood amazed at such a comparison, He explained: "My Son engendered by nature from all eternity, when He assumed human nature, obeyed Me in all things perfectly till His death. Dominic, my son by adoption, from his birth till the last moment of his life, followed My will in all things. He never transgressed one of My commandments, nor violated the virginity of either soul or body, and always preserved the grace of Baptism which regenerated him." And He went on to show the parallel in fidelity in preaching; in his instituting of an apostolic Order; in his zeal for souls; in his close imitation of the life of our blessed Lord; and He ended by saying: "thou seest that even his body resembles the body of My Divine Son."

3. But a religious founder is raised up to be not only a model to the members of his Order, but also to be an intercessor on their behalf before God.

How powerful an intercessor we have in our holy father, we may judge from what he told his children before his death; namely, that he had never asked anything of God that he did not get. And his dying promise to his weeping children was, that he would be of more help to them in Heaven than he had ever been to them when living amongst them.

Such a model we have in St. Dominic, and such an intercessor before God. And those of his children who came nearest to that model in the practice of the special virtues that he gave the example of, and who had the greatest devotion to him, were the ones who advanced to greatest holiness.

II

1. It might be asked: What was the spirit that our Holy Father transmitted to his Order? Well, that question has been answered by one of the popes, who said that the Dominican spirit was a threefold one, namely, a spirit of piety, of study, and of zeal. Of piety, in his zeal for the divine worship; of apostolicity, in his zeal for the acquirement and diffusion of the sacred sciences; and of apostolicity, in his zeal for the salvation of souls, as preachers and directors of consciences.

There is surely nothing more edifying in the lives of the saints than what is told of our Holy Father

to illustrate his spirit of prayer and his zeal for the divine worship. As a child, whenever he was missed by his nurse, he was always to be found in the church or oratory, kneeling in profound prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament. As a young man in the University of Palencia, his spirit of prayer and union with God was a source of edification to all his companions. And it was for this reason and that he might be a model to his young congregation, that the bishop of his native diocese invited him, now a young priest, to become a member of the Canons Regular founded by him. His biographer, Blessed Jordan of Saxony, who knew him well, thus describes his spirit of piety in this new sphere of his labors: "Now it was that he began to appear among his brethren like a bright burning torch. The first in holiness, the last in humility, he spread around him an odor of life that gave life, and a perfume like the sweetness of summer days. Day and night he was in the church, praying as it were without ceasing." It was his custom, we are told further, to spend the night in prayer with his door shut. But often there might be heard the voice of his groans and sighs which burst from him against his will.

See him again in his journeys, and they were incessant, take occasion to go into every wayside nook to prostrate himself in prayer; while, as he passed along, he made the country resound to the

strains of the "Ave Maris Stella," or the chant of the psalms, or the Rosary.

See him again, even in the monasteries of other Orders, take upon himself the office of bell-ringer to call the religious to the midnight Office. And then in the choir he was the soul of the whole exercise, chanting himself with all his strength, and encouraging the other religious to sing the praises of God with their whole heart.

But without developing this, let me say that his whole life is an illustration of the man filled with a spirit of prayer extraordinary even in a saint, and this spirit be transmitted in a striking manner to his Order. I will not now speak of the spirit of piety shown in the solemn celebration of the Offices of the Church as kept up in the large houses such as this. That would not be unusual or extraordinary. But I will recall to your memory the many instances recorded in the "*Traditions*," and in the "*Lives of the Brethren*," of the zeal of our fathers for the chanting of the Divine Office and for the public ceremonial of the Church, even in the midst of the overwhelming labors of the apostolate. I will recall the many instances of angelic visits to reward them for their loyalty to all the traditions that go to the making up of regular observance. Thank God, our own province is not without instances of such zeal; and throughout the province today, in

the midst of numerous obstacles, almost every house keeps up its choral observance; its meditation in common; its chapter of faults; and the numerous other observances learned by the fathers and brothers in the novitiate. But we must look to you, dear brothers, as members of the mother house, to be an example in fidelity to the venerable practices of our Order in all that regards a life of piety and the solemn celebration of the divine worship. You have here exceptional facilities for the fulfillment of all the exercises of religious piety—leisure, regularity, retirement, good and holy traditions, all the surroundings calculated to create and foster a life of piety and exalted virtue.

2. A spirit of study. The object of our Order is, as laid down in the *Constitutions,* and these are the reflex of St. Dominic's own mind—its object is "*tradere aliis contemplata,*" to preach and teach to others, truths already contemplated by ourselves. This supposes that they are contemplated, and contemplated well. In a word, the place our Order holds in the Church is one of teaching *par excellence.* Our office is to go into the pulpit or the professor's chair and teach others, both priests and people—to teach people in our churches, in our retreats and missions with superior power, and zeal, and erudition. And on this head more is expected of us than of the secular clergy, whose time is taken

up in the duties of the sacred ministry. To this effect we are given more leisure for study and for the preparation of our discourses. We get a course of superior training, and greater results are expected from us.

Now all this presupposes greater application on our part, not so much to study in general, as to the study of the sacred sciences in particular,—an application without ceasing, and that application is to last, as it is laid down in our *Constitutions*, "*usque ad mortem*—even until death."

You are now, dear brothers, passing through your course of studies. Your attention must be given uninterruptedly to those sciences which you are hereafter to impart to others. And remember that attention is not to interfere with your union with God; it is to be the instrument of that union, by the purity of intention with which you are to study, and God is to be the end and object of it all.

Pay attention to what I am going to say. Your labors at present have no immediate relation to souls, but they have an indirect relation to them; and your success hereafter will be in proportion to your application now. There are children yet unborn who in God's design are to be brought to your sermons; and the salvation of those souls hangs upon your present labors, and you will be called to account before God for their non-

conversion or damnation, should it occur through your want of zeal for study while passing through your scholasticate. You will be called to account before God for these sermons; and if you preach cold, listless, inane, unpractical and unlearned discourses, they will go away unaffected, perhaps never to get a like grace again. They will come to your confessional to seek spiritual direction; and if they go away unimproved, you will have to bear your responsibility for them before God. Now is the time for you to sow the seed which is to produce a rich harvest of souls hereafter.

In all this you are to keep before you the example of our Holy Father St. Dominic. When a student in the University of Palencia, he was distinguished among his fellow-students for his zeal for study, and it was his matured knowledge acquired during those days that gave him such power afterwards in his preaching and in his many controversies with the chiefs of the heretics, which in many cases led to their conversion. In all his journeyings and missions we are told he carried with him two favorite volumes, his breviary and the book of the Epistles of St. Paul. His abilities and his learning gained him access to the highest ecclesiastics in the Church, and he was frequently invited to preach before the pope and cardinals. It was the same desire for learning in his children

that inspired him to place his young companions under the tutorship of the greatest master of the age, Alexander de Stavenby, and when seeking foundations for his Order, he invariably, when possible, chose out the university cities where in a short time his children became in good part the recognized teachers of their age.

And in this capacity they produced imperishable works which are standard works in the ecclesiastical sciences today.

3. The last characteristic which our Holy Father transmitted to his Order is that of an absorbing zeal for souls. It was his chief characteristic and the source of inspiration to him in all his gigantic labors.

And this zeal for souls he transmitted to his children, so that from the first they were esteemed and recognized as the first religious Order in the Church to make the conversion of souls the formal object of their lives.

Some writers in the past, recognizing this characteristic of our Order, and playing upon our name of *Dominicani*, have interpreted it to mean "*canes Domini*"—"watchdogs of the Lord." And this interpretation has even found its way into art. One of the great frescoes in the Chapter House of our convent of St. Mark's in Florence represents us under this character.

This is not a mere pun or play upon words; it has its symbolic meaning, and the history of the Order in the past times, in our own country as well as throughout the world, has given them a literal interpretation. And we were in truth the watch-dogs guarding the fold of God. Whenever a heresy sprang up in the Church; whenever the Church was disturbed; whenever the honor of holy Church was imperiled; the Dominicans were in the vanguard of the army of God. They took the post of danger. Those watch-dogs were awake, and by the efficacy of their barking they drove the wolf from the fold. They closed their ranks around the sheep-fold of Jesus Christ, and defended it at the sacrifice of their lives. They went forth to infidel countries in search of the wandering sheep, to bring them back to the Lord.

What other Order in the Church has the honor of so many martyrs and apostles? What one so enriched the Church with the diadem of the sacred sciences? What Order has risked so much and sacrificed so much for the glory of God and the salvation of souls? See how gloriously our own province withstood the shock of persecution in the penal times, and the splendid array of its martyrs.

Brethren, we are the children of the saints; the heirs of the martyrs. Let us imitate them in their zeal, and show by our lives that we are still worthy

of the glorious appellation of *Domini canes*. To this effect, let us cultivate a lively and tender devotion to our Holy Father, St. Dominic, a devotion which will cause us to imitate him in his life of piety, and study, and zeal, the trinity of virtues which should characterize every Dominican worthy of the name.

DUTY OF PRAYING FOR THE DEAD

(*All Souls' Day*)

"It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." (Mach. XII, 46.)

A HOLY AND A WHOLESOME THOUGHT

1. These words, uttered long ago by the writer of the second Book of Machabees, may be quoted with peculiar aptitude on this day, set apart by the Church for the solemn commemoration of all the faithful departed. They are words that remind us of our duties towards those dear departed ones, many of whom we loved while they lived amongst us, but who may now be calling for the succor of our prayers from out the searching fires of Purgatory.

To pray thus for the dead is, according to the sacred writer, a holy thought. It is a holy thought; since it is the effluent of a heart animated with Christian charity; and nothing can be more pleasing to God than to hasten the release of those holy

souls who are detained from Heaven by reason of the debts contracted to His justice when they were on earth.

It is a wholesome thought; because, whilst we pray for others who suffer for their sins, we are ourselves reminded of the severity of God's judgments, and are restrained from the commission of sinful acts which merit a like punishment.

The doctrine which teaches that we can make intercession with God for the relief of our suffering brethren is a most consoling one, both to the dying and to those they leave behind. For to each it is an assurance that the bonds of affection which united them in life are not severed by the grave; and whilst it fills the ones with hope of a speedy deliverance through the prayers of their relatives on earth, it consoles the others by the knowledge that they can still be of service to their departed friends by their prayers and supplications to God, and it strengthens in them the hope of one day joining them in bliss. And the knowledge of this doctrine lays on us the more pressing obligation of praying for them, since we know the holy souls cannot help themselves.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE HOLY SOULS

2. But have we any conception of the sufferings of the holy souls in Purgatory? Their sufferings are

indeed extreme; and were it not that they are sustained by the love of God and the hope of one day seeing Him in Heaven, their lot would be only a little less miserable than that of the reprobate in hell. For, like them, they have to endure the pain of sense and the pain of loss, the two tortures which make up the punishment of the damned.

And first, as to the pain of sense. It is commonly laid down by the Doctors of the Church that the souls in Purgatory are punished by fire. And what a fire! Here on earth our material fires are but the instruments given us by God to minister to our wants, and their heat is consequently tempered to suit our convenience. But the fire of Purgatory has been kindled specially by God to execute justice upon sin; and, hence takes its strength from His omnipotent arm. Moreover, it possesses the miraculously given power to act immediately on immaterial spirits. St. Augustine and others tell us that it is in substance the same as that of hell, and that both are sustained by the avenging justice of the Almighty.

And the pain of loss. This is the torture of being kept separated from Him for whom they were created. To enable you to conceive the greatness of this punishment, let me tell you that it alone is sufficient to make up the torture of the damned. For, were there no fire in hell, no sensible torment,

this of itself were enough to constitute damnation; and could the lost souls but enjoy God, their last end, hell with its eternal fires and accumulation of sensible torments would on the instant become a place of joy.

Well, those two torments—the pain of sense and the pain of loss—we are taught, the holy souls suffer alike with the damned; and their condition differs from that of the reprobate only in as far as their tortures are of a temporal nature, and they are cheered by hope and the love of God. Nay, it may be said that the pain of loss is in a sense greater in the holy souls than in the damned. For to the physical tendency which the soul has to become united to its Last End, such as is common to the souls in Purgatory and to the damned, there is added the intense, burning love which possesses the holy souls and impels them incessantly to seek to cast themselves into the bosom of their Beloved.

3. But how long will they be subject to those terrible torments? Oh, here it is, dearly beloved, that we are confronted with a most mysterious uncertainty. For that is a thing that is hidden in the counsels of God. What we are assured of from tradition, from the practices of the Church, and from the revelation of the saints, is that the probation of many of those souls is long and terrible. And, in the first place, we are assured that the least pang

of Purgatory is more fierce and searching than all the sufferings that can be endured in this life, so that one moment of these pains seems to them like the accumulated sufferings of many years. What then must be their torture when, as we are assured by the saints, souls are condemned to Purgatory for centuries and ages?

This view the Church seems to take when she sanctions the celebration of daily Masses for individual souls throughout a long course of centuries. Nay, and we have the testimony of souls whom God permitted, for the edification of the faithful, to appear to holy personages after death, to assure us that such really is the case and that for faults which to us appear trivial they are condemned to suffer many years. These apparitions of holy souls are attested in many instances in the history of the Church, and believed in by those who are our models and masters in the way of sanctity. It is told, for instance, in the revelations of St. Bridget that there are souls condemned to the fires of Purgatory even to the day of the Last Judgment. St. Vincent Ferrer attests to us, also from a revelation, that persons are condemned for a whole year to Purgatory for a single venial sin. We have the famous case in the life of St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh, where his sister was detained in Purgatory in spite of the prayers of the Saint for many years.

But let the case of the father of St. Louis Bertrand be a sample of many others of a similar nature that we read of in the Lives of the Saints. It is told that his father appeared to him after death in suppliant mien and with a tearful countenance, praying him to intercede for him with God, that he might be released from the tortures that overwhelmed him. The Saint, seeing his father in such a pitiable condition, ceased not by day or by night to besiege Heaven with prayers to assuage his father's sufferings. He fasted; he did penance; he daily crucified his flesh with severe disciplines; he obtained the prayers of others; but time and again his father appeared to him in the same mournful plight and in the same suppliant condition. What with the Saint's austere penances, prayers, and Masses, it took eight years to obtain his release from pain!

And what was the crime he had to expiate during those years, that not even the prayers, and tears, and daily austerities of a saint could obtain his release for so long a time? We are led to understand that he was a man of singular piety, one who for his virtues merited to be the father of a saint; but that during life he had entertained an inordinate attachment for a nobleman who had benefited him in many ways, which attachment was the cause of impeding him in the practice of virtue.

APPEAL

4. And, O my brethren, if he who led an exemplary life was detained so long in the midst of these cruel tortures for a fault which we would consider light; what may be the sufferings to which are subjected those friends whom we loved before now, whose good qualities may have won our affection, but whose imperfections, glaring and not inconsiderable, were known to all?

From out those cruel flames, in piteous accents and with tearful eyes, there appeal to you today—of one, perhaps, a dear father who in toil and poverty wore his strength away in laboring to support you when you were unable to support yourself—a father, I say, whose manly knee you clambered in childhood and who cherished you as the only hope of his declining years—of another, a tender mother who carried you when an infant in her bosom as her only joy and the sole tie that bound her to the world—or it may be an affectionate sister who shed the perfume of a pure life around her as she moved within the family circle, but who perished like a rosebud on its stem—or a generous brother, or a fond son who met his death through fidelity to you, as he tried to win for you the means of a comfortable subsistence. It may be a fond schoolmate, or an affectionate companion

whose captivating conversation won your love in the happy hours of childhood as you played together on the lawn. Or it may be one who suffers for sins committed as the result of your evil example, and who now bears the penalty of your past misdeeds.

From out those cruel flames, I say, those once loved friends call on you today. Their pleading looks and voices seem to reproach you with neglect of that solemn but, perhaps, long forgotten promise made when they pressed your hand in the last convulsive clutch of death, and with pallid lips, and eyes in which the parting soul itself seemed to speak, they made of you their last dying request to remember them when they were gone, and pray for their speedy release from pain. Those same lips that often in rapture pressed your cheek, and those same tender eyes that often told of unutterable depths of love, plead to your unfaithful hearts today; and in the words of the prophet, they call out from their bed of pain: "Have pity on me; have pity on me, at least you, O my friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

5. Oh, dearly beloved, let this appeal of the suffering souls move your hearts, at least on this great solemnity of the commemoration of all the faithful. And if sympathy for human suffering exists on earth as one of the noblest attributes of

man; if fidelity to departed friends; if generous sacrifice on behalf of those we love; let your hearts dilate in pity, and your tears fall as the rain, over the sufferings of those, earth's noblest children, once your own dear friends, and now the beloved children of God. But let not your sympathy content itself with shedding tears over their sad, but not unhappy lot. Rather let it impel you to try all means to succor them; by prayers, by mortifications, by good works and Masses offered in their behalf. Thus indeed will your sympathy be of avail; and you will have the consolation to know that those souls to whose speedy release you will have contributed will be in a position to make you a generous return, and that God, who rewards us in kind, will raise up deliverers for you when your own hour of trial comes, and will grant you a speedy remission of your sins and admission to the abode of rest and peace.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE SAINTS

"And I saw a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and tongues standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.' And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the ancients and the four living creatures. And they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God, saying: 'Amen; benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength, to our God for ever and ever. Amen.'" (Apoc. VII, 9–12.)

I

ALL SAINTS DAY

1. The Church today puts on her grandest ceremonial; clothes herself in her most gorgeous vesture; testifies her greatest joy. And in the exuberance of her gladness she calls on all her children to rejoice in the Lord, whilst celebrating this, the festival of All Saints: a festival in which, she tells us, the angels participate in praise and thanksgiving to the Son of God.

And it is fitting that the Church should rejoice

on this grand festival. For, if it be a cause of joy to a mother to see her children raised from a lowly state to power, and position, and wealth; what joy must it not be to the Church to see her beatified ones, who while on earth were poor, and lowly, and despised, and often miserable, raised to the honor which the Apostle contemplated when he was vouchsafed a vision of the glory that surrounds the throne of God?

And it is fitting that we also should join in the triumph of the Church, and celebrate this day with joy and exultation. For if cities and nations celebrate the achievements of the great men and women who figured in their history; if they commemorate with festivity events of civic or national importance —triumphs which were mean and partial, and which often ended in disaster; how will it not be fitting in us to celebrate with joy and thanksgiving the festival dedicated to the honor of the saints whose triumphs are glorious, everlasting, and perfect?

And if during the course of the year solemn days are appointed for the commemoration of individual saints and of individual events in their history; how great should be our joy, our thanksgiving, and our praise, on this solemn festival dedicated to the honor of God, the Blessed Virgin, and the whole

hierarchy of angels and saints who surround His eternal throne?

2. And it is at this season, dear brethren, and today in particular, that the Church invites us to the contemplation of the Celestial Kingdom, which is to be our everlasting inheritance.

During the course of the year she represents in her liturgy the whole history of the human race. The four weeks of the Advent, the first season of the ecclesiastical year, represent the four thousand years that preceded the birth of Christ. During this season she recalls day after day the sad state of the human family before that great event, and repeats the longings of the patriarchs and prophets for the coming of the Messias. She calls upon us, her children, to prepare by prayer and penance for the mystical coming of Jesus Christ into our hearts at the solemn festival of Christmas.

The season from Christmas to Pentecost brings before us in review the virtues and divine prerogatives of Jesus Christ, as they are manifested in His infancy, in His private and public life, in His Passion and Resurrection, up to the time when, returning to the bosom of the Father, He sends upon His Apostles the Holy Spirit to console them in His absence, to strengthen them, and be their Preceptor in the practice of all virtue.

The season from Pentecost to All Saints shows us the Church, the spouse of Christ, speeding onward on her earthly pilgrimage; gathering the nations to her fold; instructing, humanizing, and sanctifying them; and sending them on before her to her home in Heaven.

During this long interval we sit at her feet learning the beautiful lessons of virtue which day after day she gives us in her liturgy, and striving to copy the examples she puts before us in the lives of her heroes, the confessors, and martyrs, and virgins; the great men and women she produced in every age.

And now, during the last season of the ecclesiastical year, the same Church, to console us in our trials and fill us with hope and courage, raises a little the curtain that conceals the glory that stretches out beyond, and lets a few rays of the celestial light illumine our minds, by bringing before us the everlasting triumph of the saints.

3. And, O brethren, what a subject for contemplation those triumphs of the saints, as shown in the Office and Mass of today—the ineffable majesty of God enthroned in the midst of the cherubim—the glorious humanity of Jesus Christ manifested in all its splendor—the peerless beauty of Mary seated on a throne of dazzling magnificence befitting the Queen of Heaven—the armies of angels

and archangels ranged in order before the throne of the Most High—the glittering galaxy of the saints "clothed in white robes and palms in their hands"—the vaults of heaven resonant with the praises of the beatified: "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb: Amen, benediction, and honor, and power and strength, to our God for ever and ever."

II

THE LESSONS THAT TRIUMPH TEACHES US

1. And what are the lessons that are impressed upon us by the contemplation of this grand spectacle?

First of all, it shows us the estimation in which God holds those whom He has made the sharers of His glory. Yes, now indeed they are dear to Him, since He sees them entirely devoted to Him, and nothing can separate them from Him any longer. And it was this, His estimation of His beloved redeemed ones, that He inspired the Psalmist to express, when he says: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Precious, indeed, and priceless, "are the souls of those who die in the Lord." They are precious in the sight of the Father, since He sees in their present state the ac-

complishment of His eternal design in creating them to His own image and likeness, and in ordaining them to beatitude; precious in the sight of the Son, Jesus Christ, who sees in the beatified souls so many prizes snatched from damnation by means of His labors, and sorrows, and death; precious in the sight of the Holy Ghost, through whom those souls were sanctified; precious in the sight of the whole hierarchy of angels, who see in the beatified souls their companions in glory, and the love with which the Almighty regards them.

2. But not the Blessed Trinity alone and the angels, the Church also testifies her esteem for the beatified souls. She sees in their happy state the victory won through the graces she gave them while they were on earth. From the bosom of their mothers she caught up those holy souls, adopted them, and sealed them with the sign of salvation. She invested them with all the privileges in her power, opened to them the treasury of her graces, and nourished them with her Sacraments.

With what joy did she not witness their growth in holiness under her maternal tutorship. She held before them examples of holiness; brought them under discipline by salutary corrections; counselled them through life; and in death she did not abandon them; but, like the tender mother that she is,

watched over them till she finally handed them into the bosom of their God.

What joy then for the Church today to contemplate the everlasting glory of the saints; and with what reason does she not join in their exaltation? Yes, she recognizes as her children that "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands"; and who cry out incessantly with a loud voice, saying: "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb!"

3. And we, my brethren, what ought to be our sentiments at the contemplation of the glory of the saints today? The sentiments of the brave soldier, when, struggling through fosse and palisade, he sees the flag of his country planted by his comrades on the walls of the beleaguered city; the sentiments of one who, seeing a dear relative raised to power and position in the state, feels pride and joy in his good fortune; the sentiments of one who, studying the noble actions of those who won distinction in life, tries to copy in his own conduct the virtues that ennobled them; above all, the sentiment of thanksgiving to God for the honor to which He raised them.

For are they not all our brethren in the faith of Jesus Christ; and are they not all united to us in the bonds of holy charity? Nay, some of them were our own relatives, or dear companions whom formerly we loved, and whose love for us is now consecrated by the love they bear to God.

The contemplation of their glory should fill us, moreover, with hope and courage in the midst of our trials. For are they not "those who came out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the Blood of the Lamb?" What were they when they lived on earth?

4. Some were patriarchs and prophets, men who walked with God, and who were the depositaries of His secrets.

Some were apostles and martyrs, men who burned with zeal for God's honor, and who counted life as nothing that they might extend His Kingdom upon earth.

Some were confessors and virgins, holy priests and nuns, who spent their lives in the sacred ministry, or in the practice of prayer and penance. But the great bulk of that "great multitude" were men and women who lived in the world like yourselves. Some were poor laborers and artisans who, leading a life of hardship and poverty, sanctified themselves by the faithful discharge of their humble

duties, and by performing them with the right intention of pleasing God. Some were merchants and farmers, who practised justice and charity toward their fellow men, and daily grew in grace. Some were faithful fathers and mothers who, accepting their children as charges from God, reared them up in piety. Some were dutiful sons and daughters who, recognizing in their parents the representatives of God, grew up in obedience and sobriety, "like olive plants around the table of the Lord." All were those who repented of the sins they fell into during life.

Lastly, the great subject of our contemplation here today should animate us to the faithful practice of the Commandments and the Gospel counsels; for this was the cause of their salvation. And this is what is particularly brought out in the Gospel of the day, where it is said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake; for theirs is the Kingdom

of Heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for my sake. Be glad and rejoice; for your reward is very great in Heaven."

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